

DISSERTATION

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“Explaining Palestinian Suicide Bombings from an Organizational Perspective: The (In)Effectiveness of Suicide Bombings as Organizational Strategy in the Palestinian Struggle with Israel from 1993 to 2008.”

Verfasserin

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Dedication

To the people of Palestine and Israel, may they find peace.

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1 Introduction and Framework Analysis

'Those to whom evil is done/Do evil in return.' W.H.Auden

Suicide terrorism - the readiness and willingness to die in the process of committing an act of terror - is a complex and multi-causal phenomenon, and any attempt to explain and understand the motivations and actions of suicide bombers and groups must take the different factors involved into account. Several previous studies have been conducted on the topic, but have failed to take into account the multiplicity of factors involved. One approach to understanding suicide bombings and their motivations is to assume that they are solely the results of strategic choice – that is, logical reasoning aimed at achieving rational, strategic goals.

Another approach is to assume that suicide bombings are not strategic or logical at all, but rather the results of individual, psychological factors. However, neither of these approaches alone offers an accurate explanation of all suicide bombing behaviors and motivations. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, the motives for suicide bombings must be examined from an organizational perspective. The different Palestinian factions used the individual motivations and social support of suicide bombings to further their organizational objectives. The objectives ranged from revenge, retaliation, and provocation of government concessions and included tactical goals with the intention of disrupting peace processes or acquiring political recognition and status. Further organizational motivations in the Palestinian case also included inter-factional rivalry for power.

This research study examines the ways in which the Palestinian suicide attacks that were carried out from 1993 to 2008 in the struggle against Israel can be

understood as an expression of political strategy, and attempts to show that the use of suicide bombings followed logical processes that can be explained at the organizational level (which includes the individual and social/cultural levels).

The study examines why Palestinian groups heavily relied (but not exclusively) on 'suicide bombing' operations against Israeli targets during the course of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. It then explains why and how this form of resistance was adopted by secular resistance groups, such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades of Fatah, after it had previously been the monopoly of Islamic religious resistance groups, namely Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The study then proceeds to discuss how the organizations used the individual factors that led Palestinians to volunteer for and conduct suicide missions to their advantage. The discussion also focuses on why there was strong Palestinian public support for suicide bombing operations, and why and how this changed depending on the given political situation. The concluding analysis is dedicated to a discussion of how effective these suicide attacks were in achieving the political and strategic aims stated by the various organizations, and what was ultimately the greatest factor that prevented suicide attacks from achieving these aims – was it the Israeli counter-measures or Palestinian inter-organizational rivalry?

Among the many authors of research studies on the phenomenon, Ami Pedahzur, deputy chair of the National Security Studies Center at Haifa University, is considered an internationally renowned expert on suicide terrorism. I share his belief that suicide bombings are a social political phenomenon. Pedahzur emphasizes the instrumental nature of suicide terrorism and states that organizations employ this tactic when their leaders believe it is an effective instrument in furthering their political objectives. Suicide terrorism is not only used to destroy a specific target, but

has a broader intention of creating an atmosphere of fear and terror. According to Pedahzur, the organizations employing suicide missions are motivated by the belief that the collective public anxiety generated by suicide bombings will translate into political gains for their organizations.

Suicide terrorism is not solely an Islamic phenomenon, as was previously believed, but has also been employed by secular groups, such as the Palestinian Fatah, a nationalist organization. Therefore, religion cannot be treated as an independent factor when analyzing the phenomenon of suicide bombings. Pedahzur also cautions that “Islam is not the factor that explains suicide terrorism and treating it as so is misleading.”¹

Based on the comparative case studies conducted by Pedahzur², 95 percent of suicide attacks worldwide were initiated by organizations (not by individuals). In order for a suicide campaign to be successful, it not only requires individuals who are willing to perpetrate the attacks, but also a community that supports them. Hence, according to Pedahzur, the organizations employing suicide bombing tactics have glorified suicide missions, seeking to create “a culture of death” within the community. To do so they capitalize on the community’s belief that it is the target of discrimination and violence, and the resulting sense of hopelessness and powerlessness. The organizations promote suicide bombings as a way the community can empower itself. Referring to the false connection between Islam and suicide terrorism, Pedahzur explains that “Islam has no culture of death embedded

¹ Interview with Ami Pedahzur, February 28, 2005:
http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1416&fuseaction=topics.item&news_id=108487

² Pedahzur, Ami; 'Suicide Terrorism' (Polity Press, 2005)

in it. Organizations market this culture of death by *using* religious symbols because it helps them achieve their goals.”³

In addition to the importance of the organization and the community that supports it, the individual level must also be considered within this context. What makes the suicide bombers volunteer? Early studies on suicide bombings attempted to profile the suicide bomber, yet most studies concluded that suicide bombers exhibited no distinct features. Pedahzur suggests that suicide terrorism is a social political phenomenon and has very little to do with personal characteristics. He argues that there are two main types of individual motivations---crisis and commitment, whereby the crisis can be communal or personal. “We see that the best predictor is taking revenge. When you see a loved one getting killed, it is a very strong predictor...we see this everywhere.”⁴ A further variable is the social network. A number of case studies have shown that close family ties or friendship bonds are common among suicide bombers.

Suicide terrorism has been used effectively in the past. For example, it led to the withdrawal of the United States and France from Lebanon in the mid-1980s. Suicide bombings will continue to be used by groups when they believe it is an effective means to an end. Conversely, suicide bombings will decline in incidence when the organizations conclude that it is not effective as an instrument or if its use undercuts their political agenda.

³ Interview with Ami Pedahzur, February 28, 2005:
http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1416&fuseaction=topics.item&news_id=108487

⁴ Interview with Ami Pedahzur, February 28, 2005:
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1.1 Structure

The paper is structured as follows: To gain a better understanding of the terminology, the terms 'terrorism' and 'suicide terrorism' are both defined and explained in this first chapter. Chapter 2 outlines and analyses the roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, without which an understanding of the development of the use of suicide bombings would not be definitive. This chapter also focuses on the Palestinian organizations that emerged especially under the banner of Islam (Hamas, Islamic Jihad) and includes the political profiles of the key Palestinian groups, the reasons why the organizations decided on suicide bombings, and how martyrdom was legitimized by politicizing Islam – a tactic used by Hamas. Chapter 3 examines the organizational motives of using suicide terrorism – that is, why organizations use suicide terrorism, the strategic logic of insurgent groups, and the interactions between the different dimensions (i.e. how the organizations seek societal support by creating a culture of martyrdom). The central problem is to determine when an organization finds suicide attacks useful. This chapter also discusses the individual motivations and explores the societal motives in supporting suicide bombing attacks. The latter psychology is important to grasp because the logic of communities in conflict is key to understanding the phenomenon of suicide bombings in the Palestinian case study. Chapter 4 turns to a discussion of the effectiveness of suicide bombings as an organizational strategy according to the objectives of the different Palestinian organizations – whether to gain political concessions from Israel, elicit Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories or to gain public support and internal political power. Chapter 5 discusses the impact of

Israel's counterterrorism measures on the organizations' use of suicide bombings as a tactic. The final chapter turns to the present status quo.

1.2 Historical Research Methodology

I have chosen historical analysis as a research method since important insights can be gained from past events which can help us understand, interpret and perhaps even predict and control current and future events. I share historian Ilan Pappé's belief that the present events are heavily shaped and influenced by events and perceptions developed in the past, and that the main value of research of this type can be categorized as follows:

- a) It throws light on present and future trends.
- b) It enables the understanding of and solutions to contemporary problems to be sought in the past.
- c) It can explain the effects of key interactions within a culture or sub-culture.
- d) It enables the revaluation of data on selected hypotheses, theories and generalizations that are presently held about the past and the present.

1.3 Data Sources

I collected data on Palestinian suicide bombings within the Israeli-Palestinian 1967 border (the green line), Israeli arrests of suspects planning suicide-bombing operations, Israeli targeted killings of suspects, and Israeli interceptions of suicide bombers already en route (Mintz et al. 2004). I obtained data describing suicide bombings in Israel from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since>

+2000/Victims+of+Palestinian+Violence+and+Terrorism+sinc.htm) and from the International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism's terror-attack database (http://www.ict.org.il/arab_isr/mideast_attacksearch_frame.htm). I obtained data on targeted hits from B'tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (<http://www.btselem.org/index.asp>). I also obtained published data on interceptions from the archives of the newspaper *Ha'aretz* (<http://www.haaretz.co.il>) and cross-validated them with data from Palestinian sources (for example, the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, <http://www.phrmg.org>, and the Palestinian Information Center, <http://palestine-info.info/index.html>). I took data on Israeli preventive arrests from the IDF Website: (<http://www1.idf.il/dover/site/mainpage.asp?sl=EN&id=22&docid=37572.EN>). The data was processed by collecting, classifying, ordering, synthesizing, evaluating and interpreting the material available.

1.4 Framework Analysis

Recent literature on the root causes of suicide terrorism yields several hypotheses, most notably Robert Pape's theory that suicide attacks are a strategic response by insurgent groups confronting foreign occupation⁵. I demonstrate in this research study, however, that the Palestinian suicide bombings in particular are a product of political and organizational features of the various groups themselves. More specifically, why did the organizations adopt suicide missions as a tactic in their struggle against the Israeli occupation forces? What role did the Palestinian society play in its condoning of the "martyrdom operations" and acceptance of the

⁵ Pape, Robert A. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review* 97:343-362 August 2003.

suicide bombers as heroes? My analysis focuses on whether the suicide attacks used in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from 1993 to 2008 were effective (whereby effective will be defined as the extent to which the purpose of the attack as indicated in the statement claiming ownership of the attack was fulfilled, i.e. revenge for Israeli targeted killings, mass reprisals, political concessions, etc) or just gave rise to reprisals.

As discussed above, previous and recent research studies on Palestinian suicide bombings show that the phenomenon cannot be explained by a single overarching motivation. To understand this form of political violence, we must approach the analysis at four different levels: the political and strategic motivations, the individual motivations, the organizational objectives, and the societal motives. At each level of analysis there are different factors at play that explain why the Palestinian individuals, organizations, and society embraced suicide bombings as a strategy of resistance (during the Al-Aqsa Intifada).

At the individual level, the Palestinian case study shows how motives rooted in nationalistic aspirations, religious redemption, and social ties created psychological and social incentives to seek a “heroic” end. Organizations may be able to manipulate and indoctrinate some individuals to carry out the suicide attacks, but when these attacks reach such high levels as in the Palestinian Intifada of 2000, the phenomenon cannot simply be explained away with notions of “brainwashing” or religious indoctrination. One must explore how the various Palestinian organizations were able to persuasively frame suicide bombings as rational, legitimate, and necessary means to achieve liberation from occupation which spoke to the desires of the individuals. The Palestinian suicide bombers are not very different from other rebels or soldiers in history around the world who were willing to conduct risky

operations out of a sense of duty and obligation to their fellow comrades, families, communities, or God. What motivates individuals to make such sacrifices in both cases is their great sense of personal identity with the cause combined with feelings of obligation towards their friends, team members, family, community, or faith. The Palestinian organizations framed suicide attacks as acts of heroism, as religious imperative, and as opportunities for salvation. In doing so, they fostered a culture of martyrdom that inspired future volunteers to conduct suicide attacks. The socio-cultural context in which this takes place is of equal importance for this to be possible (more on this later).

At the organizational level, the Palestinian case suggests that strategic calculation with regard to balancing asymmetric warfare was the main motivation behind deploying suicide attacks. While many individual bombers may be motivated to carry out a suicide attack for religious or nationalistic motives, or for their community, organizational leaders are first and foremost motivated by the tactical advantages of suicide bombings. Asymmetry in power forces the weaker party to seek other methods in order to surprise and counter their opponents' stronger capabilities. 'Human' bombs are a more effective 'weapon' because they are flexible, accurate, extremely lethal, and can change target destinations if the need arises. They are also relatively cheap to produce and their psychological impact on the enemy is quite significant.

In some instances, the use of suicide bombings was intended to gain organizational support in the face of rivalry among the different groups. In such cases, the intended effect of suicide bombings is not liberation from occupation *per*

se, but organizational maintenance or survival.⁶ Religious and nationalist interests are merely instruments that further organizational needs. The culture of martyrdom is thus created for the purpose of generating volunteers to execute organizational strategies.⁷

At the societal level, the Palestinian case study shows that a deep sense of victimization reinforced societal support for suicide bombings. In the first two months of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, before the use of suicide attacks by the different Palestinian factions began, the military tactics used by the Israeli occupying authorities to suppress Palestinian rioting caused the conflict to escalate rather than contain the violence. Confronted with such excessive use of force (see Table 1 below), Palestinians began calling for retribution against Israelis in return⁸. When Hamas and Islamic Jihad began sending out suicide bombers, the Palestinian communities in the Occupied Territories felt empowered in the face of Israel's superior military capabilities. However, the suicide bombings drove Israel to employ even harsher measures, resulting in a security dilemma on both sides, where actions by one party to "safeguard its security" created increasing insecurity on the other side. The violence, however, was not solely motivated by the sense of security issue. Authorities on both sides promoted or acquiesced to this type of violence in pursuing their own agendas. For example, religious authorities inside Palestine and in the Muslim world conferred the status of "martyrs" on Palestinian human bombs, thus giving legitimacy to the culture of martyrdom and to recruiters of suicide bombers.

⁶ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

Table 1⁹

Injured Palestinian in Al-Aqsa Intifada, by Year and Tool of Injury 29 September 2000-31 March 2008

Year	Tool of Injury				Total
	Live Ammunition	Metal Bullet	Gas	Miscellaneous ⁽¹⁾	
2000 ⁽²⁾	2,168	4,067	3,318	1,050	10,603
2001	1,442	1,237	1,484	2,223	6,386
2002	1,659	244	536	1,943	4,382
2003	1,010	327	215	1,440	2,992
2004	1,318	433	777	1,481	4,009
2005	237	232	174	350	993
2006	451	303	118	909	1,781
2007	214	174	29	269	686
2008 ⁽³⁾	212	83	51	391	737
January	55	28	20	104	207
February	32	4	12	126	174
March	125	51	19	161	356
Total	8,711	7,100	6,702	10,056	32,569

⁽¹⁾ Miscellaneous include beating, torture, etc

⁽²⁾ Data Includes the period 29/9 – 31/12/2000

⁽³⁾ Data Includes the months listed only

Source: Palestine Red Crescent Society, 2007.

These findings show that the study of suicide bombers cannot be reduced to individual motivations or societal contexts. The case of the Palestinian suicide bombers demonstrates that perhaps one cannot develop a comprehensive explanation of suicide terrorism without examining the strategic and political tools and objectives underlying the use of such a method by the Palestinian organizations.

1.5 Definition of Terms

1.5.1 Problems of Definition

Many authors have noted the immense difficulties in defining terrorism and

⁹ Source: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/Intifada/98dd344c-21be-4672-a252-c6890e201d58.htm

suicide terrorism. Literature provides hundreds of definitions for terrorism. Some definitions focus on the perpetrator, others on the purpose, and others on the technique. There are two characteristics of terrorism that distinguish it from other forms of violence. The first is that terrorism is aimed at non-combatants. This characteristic sets terrorism apart from war-fighting, in which non-combatants may be killed or injured in the process, but are not explicitly targeted. Second, terrorists use violence to instill dread and fear in the target audience – this dramatic psychological effect is often more important than the physical result.¹⁰

Before examining the specific case of the Palestinian suicide bombers in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it is important to begin by defining terrorism and suicide terrorism. The most problematic question in this regard is defining which actions can be designated as acts of terrorism. Since the word "terrorism" is both politically as well as emotionally charged¹¹, providing a precise all-encompassing definition is difficult. Terrorism expert Walter Laqueur has counted over 100 definitions and concludes that the 'only general characteristic generally agreed upon is that terrorism involves violence and the threat of violence.'¹²

During the 1970s and 1980s, the United Nations' attempts to define the term terrorism failed mainly due to the differences of opinion among various member states about the use of violence in conflicts over national liberation and self-determination. The 1977 Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 recognized in Article 1. Paragraph 4 "... in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes..." contains many ambiguities over who is or is not a legitimate combatant. Hence,

¹⁰ Stern, Jessica. 2003. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. New York: HarperCollins.

¹¹ Hoffman, Bruce *"Inside Terrorism"* Columbia University Press 1998. Page 32

¹² Jeffrey Record. *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*, 1 December 2003 ISBN 1-58487-146-6, p. 6 (page 12 of the PDF document) citing in footnote 11: Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 6.

depending on the perspective, a resistance movement may or may not be labeled a terrorist group based on whether the members of the resistance movement are considered lawful or unlawful combatants and their right to resist occupation is recognized. Ultimately, the distinction is a relative political judgment.¹³

The modern definition of terrorism is inherently controversial. Both state and non-state actors use violence to achieve political ends. The difficulty is in agreeing on when the use of violence (directed at whom, by whom, for what ends) is legitimate. The majority of definitions in use have been written by agencies directly associated with a government, and are thus biased to exclude governments from the definition of terrorism.

1.5.2 Defining Terrorism

Although it is generally recognized that there is no official definition of terrorism, there are many functional descriptions. For instance, Wilkinson (2001: 206) describes it as a special form of political violence with five characteristics:

1. It is premeditated and aims to create a climate of extreme fear or terror.
2. It is directed at a wider audience or target than the immediate victims of the violence.
3. It inherently involves attacks on random and symbolic targets, including civilians.
4. The acts of violence committed are seen by the society in which they occur as extranormal, in the literal sense that they breach social norms, thus causing a sense of outrage; and
5. Terrorism is generally used to try to influence political behavior in some way: for example, to force opponents into conceding some or all of the perpetrators demands, to provoke an over-reaction, to serve as a catalyst for more general conflict or to publicize a political or religious cause, to inspire followers to emulate violent attacks, to give vent to deep hatred and the thirst for revenge, and to help undermine governments and institutions designate as enemies by the terrorists.

¹³ Khan, Ali Ali, "A Theory of International Terrorism". Connecticut Law Review, Vol. 19, p. 945, 1987

Boaz Ganor, Director of The International Institute for Counter Terrorism based in Herzliya, Israel, proposed the following definition of terrorism in his article “Defining Terrorism - Is One Man's Terrorist Another Man's Freedom Fighter?”:

“The definition proposed here states that terrorism is the intentional use of, or threat to use violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims. This definition is based on three important elements:

1. **The essence of the activity**—the use of, or threat to use, **violence**. According to this definition, an activity that does not involve violence or a threat of violence will not be defined as terrorism (including non-violent protest—strikes, peaceful demonstrations, tax revolts, etc.).
2. **The aim of the activity is always political**—namely, the goal is to attain political objectives; changing the regime, changing the people in power, changing social or economic policies, etc. In the absence of a political aim, the activity in quest will not be defined as terrorism. A violent activity against civilians that has no political aim is, at most, an act of criminal delinquency, a felony, or simply an act of insanity unrelated to terrorism. Some scholars tend to add ideological or religious aims to the list of political aims. The advantage of this definition, however, is that it is as short and exhaustive as possible. The concept of “political aim” is sufficiently broad to include these goals as well. The motivation—whether ideological, religious, or something else—behind the political objective is irrelevant for the purpose of defining terrorism.
3. **The targets of terrorism are civilians**. Terrorism is thus distinguished from other types of political violence (guerrilla warfare, civil insurrection, etc.). Terrorism exploits the relative vulnerability of the civilian “underbelly”—the tremendous anxiety, and the intense media reaction evoked by attacks against civilian targets. The proposed definition emphasizes that terrorism is not the result of an accidental injury inflicted on a civilian or a group of civilians who stumbled into an area of violent political activity, but stresses that this is an act purposely directed against civilians. Hence, the term “terrorism” should not be ascribed to collateral damage to civilians used as human shields or to cover military activity or installations, if such damage is incurred in an attack originally aimed against a military target. In this case, the responsibility for civilian casualties is incumbent upon whoever used them as shields.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Boaz Ganor, Defining Terrorism - Is One Man's Terrorist Another Man's Freedom Fighter? Retrieved from <http://www.ict.org.il/ResearchPublications/tabid/64/Articlsid/432/currentpage/1/Default.aspx> on 2008-07-17

For the purposes of this research paper, terrorism will be defined in accordance with Jessica Stern's definition as "an act or threat of violence against non-combatants with the objective of exacting revenge, intimidating, or otherwise influencing an audience"¹⁵. This definition of terrorism does not limit perpetrator or purpose and allows for a range of possible actors (states, international groups, or individuals) and all alleged goals (political, religious, economic).

The characteristics of terrorism as defined above in turn raise additional questions. How do we define non-combatants? A soldier on a battlefield is unquestionably a combatant, but what if he is riding a bus also carrying civilians, as happens regularly in Israel, when a suicide bomber attacks? Under these circumstances many would claim that the soldier is not a combatant in this instance, as he is off-duty. On the other hand, some Palestinian groups claim that every Israeli citizen is a soldier – even children (who will later grow up to join the Israeli army).¹⁶

1.5.2.1 State Terror

A second controversial issue is the perpetrator of the violent act. Can a state commit acts whose purpose is to intimidate non-combatants, and might be labeled terrorism? States can and do unleash terrorist violence against their own civilians and as an instrument of war by deliberately attacking civilians in the hope of crushing morale. Israel frequently engages in 'collective punishment' in the Occupied Territories. According to Jeff Halper, the Coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Israel's attacks upon an innocent civilian population are

¹⁵ Stern, Jessica. 2003. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. New York: HarperCollins.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.40

so indiscriminate and disproportionate that they can only be described as state terrorism.¹⁷ Attacks on non-combatant populations, collective punishment and the demolition of homes are all illegal under international law and constitute war crimes, as even Yossi Sarid, former Knesset minister, declared in an article in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.¹⁸ The use of Israeli fighter jets, missiles, tanks, bulldozers and ground troops on densely populated civilian areas, the destruction of entire neighborhoods, can only be called state terrorism. To add to the tragedy, the camps and neighborhoods under attack are home to Palestinians made refugees by Israel in 1948.

In fact, since the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000, repeated Israeli bombardments and assassinations against Palestinians have contributed to aggravating the violence. Many major Palestinian suicide attacks since 2001 have come in retaliation for Israeli “targeted assassinations”, many of which occurred when the Palestinians were abiding by self-imposed restraint. To give just two of numerous similar instances: On July 22, 2002, an Israeli air attack on a crowded apartment block in Gaza City killed a senior Hamas leader, Salah Shehada, and fourteen civilians, nine of them children, hours before a widely reported unilateral cease-fire declaration. A suicide bombing followed on August 4. On June 10, 2003, Israel's attempted assassination of the senior Hamas political leader in Gaza, Abdel-Aziz al-Rantisi, which wounded him and killed four Palestinian civilians, led to a bus bombing in Jerusalem on June 11 that killed sixteen Israelis.

Although Israeli provocations don't justify suicide bombings, they demonstrate how Israel's means of deterrence can also be defined as terrorism, and why the

¹⁷ Article retrieved from <http://electronicIntifada.net/v2/article2676.shtml>: Halper, Jeff, “Israel's "state terrorism in Gaza”, *The Electronic Intifada*, 14 May 2004

¹⁸ Haaretz, 14 May 2004

source of terrorism lies first and foremost in its aggression and occupation.¹⁹ In this context, Palestinian civilians are also victims of state terrorism, just as Palestinian suicide attacks can be coined acts of terrorism. The purpose is the same: to intimidate the wider public and provoke a state of terror in order to compel the government or organizations to abstain from their actions or concede to concessions. Only the means are different. This is one of the reasons why suicide attacks began to be employed by the Palestinian militant groups in the first place. To balance the ‘terror’.

1.5.3 Defining Suicide Terrorism

Perhaps the most frequently cited definition of suicide terrorism, or a martyrdom operation, comes from the Israeli terrorism expert, Yoram Schweitzer (2002:78), which says a suicide attack (attack being the word preferred by those who believe terrorism is too charged a word) is "*a politically motivated violent attack perpetrated by a self-aware individual (or individuals) who actively and purposely causes his own death through blowing himself up along with his chosen target. The perpetrator's ensured death is a precondition for the success of his mission.*" The latter part of this definition--the notion that success means death of the perpetrator--is a defining feature according to Crenshaw (2002) and Ganor (2002).

Scott Atran defines suicide terrorism as “the targeted use of self-destructing humans against noncombatant—typically civilian—populations to effect political change”.²⁰ He claims that the principal use of suicide terrorism is “as a weapon of psychological warfare intended to affect a larger public audience.” Ariel Merari

¹⁹ Bishara, Marwan, “Israel on the Offensive”, July 12, 2006, retrieved from <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060717/bishara>

²⁰ Atran, S. 2003. Genesis of suicide terrorism. *Science* 299(5612) 1534–1539.

(1990) and Ami Pedahzur (2003) examined the characteristics of suicide bombers and their motivations. In an article in the *American Political Science Review*, Robert Pape argued that suicide terrorism follows a strategic logic, “one specifically designed to coerce modern liberal democracies to make significant territorial concessions.” Pape also wrote that, over the past two decades, suicide terrorism has been on the rise “largely because terrorists have learned that it pays”.²¹

Definitions are controversial for theoretical reasons. What is considered an act of suicide by some is viewed as a form of self-sacrifice for a noble, greater cause, that is martyrdom, by others. Some authors have suggested that suicide terrorism can be traced back to the eleventh to thirteenth centuries AD to ancient groups such as the Jewish Sicarii (first century AD) and the Assassins (Hashishiyun). However, bearing in mind the definitions of suicide attacks stated above, this claim is false due to the absence of the element of self-immolation. Both the Sicarii and the Assassins killed their opponents by dagger. Although they took a very high risk of being caught and executed in the process, they never purposefully killed themselves.

For the purposes of this essay, suicide attacks are defined as attacks or attempted attacks during which the perpetrator reaches his or her target or its vicinity carrying or wearing an explosive device which s/he intends to detonate (i.e., the suicide bomber is aware that s/he has no chance of remaining alive, assuming the explosive device detonates as planned).²² In the Palestinian case study, from the point of view of those who support such attacks, the act is not considered suicide as the term is generally accepted, i.e., an act of desperation carried out for personal reasons (Arabic: *intihar*), which is forbidden by Islam. On the contrary, it is an act of

²¹ Pape, Robert A. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review* 97:343-362 August 2003.

²² Similar definition issued by Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S), retrieved from http://www.mefacts.com/cached.asp?x_id=11731

martyrdom carried out by a Muslim (male or female) for the sake of Allah (*istishhad*). Thus a suicide bomber is referred to as *istishhadi*, that is, one who has knowingly sacrificed himself or herself for the sake of Allah. According to the modern Islamist interpretation, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, a *shaheed* is anyone who dies during the confrontation. That includes anyone who is killed in a planned attack against Israel or was killed by Israel (i.e., in a targeted assassination or by sniper fire or in an exchange of fire, etc.). The term *istishhadi* is used by the Palestinian organizations to give a special merit to suicide bombers who have of their own free will chosen to become shaheeds and knowingly gone out on a mission from which they know they have no chance of returning alive. The suicide bombing act is called '*amaliyyah istishhadiyyah* (an act of self-sacrifice for the sake of Allah). The targets are populated areas inside Israel: crowded streets, shopping malls, buses, restaurants, etc. It is a modern term which is not found in classic or medieval Islamic literature, but which has become common today in Palestinian society and the Arab world.

Suicide attacks demonstrate the perpetrators' determination and devotion, to the extent of killing themselves for their cause. The vigor of this resolve instills the impression that people who are willing to sacrifice themselves cannot be stopped, which has an added psychological effect on the wider population. Due to the nature of suicide attacks (see description above), they can also be more lethal than other forms of violence, and this lethality may also explain the increasing attractiveness of this method for the groups. Robert Pape (2003), for example, has attributed the increase in number of suicide attacks to their apparent effectiveness in terms of number of fatalities. He argues that suicide operations have often succeeded in gaining at least partial concessions from the targeted governments.

Another definition proposed by Scott Atran²³ focuses on the goals of suicide terrorism and states that the suicide attacker's intention is to cause harm to as many people as possible, with the ultimate purpose of effecting some type of political change. According to this definition, the perpetrator's action is in fact aimed at the destruction of a chosen target. However, the means for bringing about political change lie in the psychological effects the attacks have on the greater populace.²⁴

So the conclusions that can be drawn from the above definitions are that although suicide terrorism also aims at destroying or damaging a specific target, its real intention is to create an atmosphere of terror amidst a population not necessarily exposed to the incident directly, but rather those who are informed about it from a secondary source (i.e. the media). As the organizations using this form of attack perceive it, public pressure resulting from this collective anxiety may translate into political gains.

1.6 Explaining Suicide Terrorism

In the late 19th century, Emile Durkheim published a first in-depth study on suicide. In his typology of suicide types, Durkheim discusses egoistic, altruistic and fatalistic suicide types. According to Durkheim, and contrary to egoistic suicide whose motives are individual, altruistic suicide intends to serve the will of the collective. This kind of suicide is the result of a situation in which a person is integrated into a social group which advocates the act of suicide. As a result, the interests and desires of the individual become secondary to the group and s/he will

²³ Atran, S. 2003. Genesis of suicide terrorism. *Science* 299(5612) 1534–1539.

²⁴ Ibid.

take any measures necessary to help advance its goals.²⁵

Fatalistic suicide is associated with an environment in which the individual or social context to which s/he belongs has been subject to persistent oppression, leading to feelings of despair and a belief that the future does not promise any improvement in these conditions. This type of despair may arise from hopelessness stemming from economic conditions as well as under the circumstances of the restriction of political and civil liberties.²⁶ According to Pedahzur (2005), in contrast to the individualistic types of suicide (which occur mostly in post-industrial societies), the altruistic and fatalistic suicide types are more common in traditional societies that have undergone political, social and economic transformation.²⁷ When a person with a profound sense of calling takes his/her own life as part of a social role required of him or her, the action is considered to be altruistic suicide, whereas if s/he performs this act from within a sense of deep despair, in most cases, this will be referred to as fatalistic suicide.²⁸ It appears that in the case of the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation, suicide became a means by which to fulfill a broader purpose, namely, the intentional and more extensive harm to other people in the fulfillment of a common political goal.

On the other hand, the suitability of Durkheim's concept of altruistic suicide to the phenomenon of suicide terrorism in the Palestinian case is questionable on

²⁵ Durkheim distinguishes three sub-categories of altruistic suicide: obligatory, optional and acute altruistic suicide. While Ariel Merari maintains that optional altruistic suicide is most applicable to suicide terrorism phenomenon, Ami Pedhazur's view is that acute altruistic suicide is the most relevant to this phenomenon. For a discussion of this matter, see Ariel Merari 'Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism' in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, Proceedings of an Expert Meeting on the Root Causes of Terrorism (9-11 June 2003), Oslo: The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2003; also, Emile Durkheim *Suicide*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952, pp. 217-40; and Ami Pedhazur *Suicide Terrorism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005, pp.6-10

²⁶ Steven Stack 'Durkheim's Theory of Fatalistic Suicide: A Cross-National Approach', *The Journal of Social Psychology* (1979), 107: 161-8

²⁷ Hussein Sirriyeh 'Democratization and the Palestinian National Authority: From State in the Making to Statehood', *Israel Affairs* (2000), 7(1): 49-62.

²⁸ Young Lung-Chang 'Altruistic Suicide: A Subjective Approach', *Sociological Bulletin* (1972), 21(2): 103-21

several grounds. Among others, Durkheim used the concept of altruistic suicide to characterize societies, not individuals (for a more in-depth discussion of the suitability of Durkheim's concept to the phenomenon of suicide terrorism see Merari)²⁹. It can be argued that the important factor is the micro-society of a terrorist group itself that provides the social environment open to generating self-sacrificial suicide, in accordance with Durkheim's altruistic type. According to Merari, there are highly cohesive and rigorous rules of conduct and behavioral ethics that members are expected to abide and live by.

Psychological theories of suicide have also attempted to explain the phenomenon of suicide terrorism. Schneidman, for example, emphasizes the element of despair.³⁰ In his view, the wish to commit suicide is almost always caused by intense psychological pain, which is triggered by frustrated psychological needs. The prevailing emotion of suicides is the feeling of hopelessness-helplessness (Schneidman 1985, 1999). Farber (1968)³¹ also underscored the role of hopelessness in creating the wish to commit suicide: the greater the feeling of hope, the less the likelihood of suicide. Hope is the perceived ability to influence the world, and to be satisfied by the world. However, Farber's concept of hope relates more to the individual's ability to function in his own social surroundings, rather than to a broader communal situation, such as being under occupation. With regard to Palestinian suicide terrorism, whereas it can be argued that the suicide attacks were motivated by despair associated with frustrated national needs at the national or community level, there is no evidence that the persons who carried out the suicide

²⁹ Ariel Merari 'Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism' in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, Proceedings of an Expert Meeting on the Root Causes of Terrorism (9-11 June 2003), Oslo: The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2003

³⁰ Schneidman, Edwin S. "The Suicidal Mind", Oxford University Press, 1996

³¹ Quoted in 'Suicide Over the Life Cycle: Risk Factors, Assessment, and Treatment of Suicidal Patients'; Susan J. Blumenthal, David J. Kupfer, American Psychiatric Pub, 1990

attacks suffered from despair at the individual level. In none of the cases studied did the profiles of the suicide bombers resemble a typical suicide candidate, as described in the literature. The individuals who committed the suicide attacks had not made earlier attempts at self-immolation, were not in conflict with their family and friends, and many had not expressed being fed up with life.³² In the suicide bombers' notes and last messages, the act of self-destruction was presented as a form of struggle, an act of projecting power rather than as an escape. Therefore, it seems that most suicide attacks in the Palestinian case study were not 'suicidal' in the usual psychological sense. The key to understanding the Palestinian suicide bombings, then, should be sought in an area other than personality disorders and suicidality. And as claimed earlier in this paper, it is best to examine the phenomenon from a political, organizational and social perspective.

1.6.1 The Making of Suicide Bombers

In an interview with Jessica Stern in the course of her research on suicide bombers, Brigadier General Nizar Ammar of the Palestinian General Security Organization recounted the profile of the typical Palestinian suicide bomber prior to the second Intifada as follows:

Young, often a teenager.

He is mentally immature.

There is a pressure on him to work.

He can't find a job.

He has no options, and there is no social safety net to help him.

He would try to work for the PA but he doesn't get a job because he has no connections.

He tries to get into Arafat's army, but again, he doesn't have the right connections. He doesn't have vitamin "W" ("W" is an expression of wasta in Arabic which refers to political, social and personal connections).

He has no girlfriend or fiancé.

³² Ariel Merari 'Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism' in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, p.78

On the days he is off, he has no money to go to the disco and pick up girls (even if it were acceptable).

No means for him to enjoy life in any way.

Life has no meaning but pain.

Marriage is not an option – it's expensive and he can't even take care of his own family.

He feels he has lost everything.

The only way out is to find refuge in God.

He goes to the local mosque.

It's not like in the United States where they just go to church on Sundays.

He begins going to the mosque five times a day – even for the 4 a.m. prayers (an average devoted Muslim will not attend the early morning prayers).

Hamas members are there and notice him looking anxious, worried, and depressed and that he is coming every day.

It's a small society here, people tend to know each other. They will ask about him, discover his situation.

Gradually, they will begin to recruit him.

They talk to him about the afterlife and tell him that paradise awaits him if he dies in the jihad. They explain to him that if he volunteers for a suicide bombing, his family name will be held in the highest respect. He will be remembered as a shaheed (martyr, a hero). He will become a martyr and Hamas will give his family about 5,000 USD, wheat flour, sugar, other staples, and clothing. The most important thing is that his family's status will be raised significantly, they too will be treated as heroes. The condition for all this: he is not allowed to tell anyone. They will take him away from home 48 hours before the operation so there is no chance for him to reconsider. During this period he will write his last letters and sign his will, making it difficult to turn back.³³

Ariel Merari gained a comprehensive picture of the process of making suicide bombers with the data he collected on Palestinian suicide bombers, including interviews with trainers for such missions and intercepted suicide bombers. The data he collected suggested that there are three main elements in the preparation of a suicide bomber by an organization: indoctrination, group commitment and a personal pledge. These elements are described below.³⁴

- Indoctrination: Throughout the preparation for a suicide mission, the candidate is subjected to indoctrination by authoritative persons in the group. Although the candidate is, presumably, convinced from the start in the justification of

³³ Stern, Jessica. 2003. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. New York: HarperCollins, p. 51

³⁴ Taken from Ariel Merari's findings quoted in 'Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism' in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, 2005, p.78

the cause for which s/he is willing to die, the indoctrination is intended to further strengthen the motivation and to keep it from dwindling. Indoctrination in the religious Palestinian groups (Hamas and PIJ) included nationalist themes (Palestinian humiliation by Israel, examples of acts of heroism during the Islamic wars), and religious themes (the act of self-sacrifice is Allah's will, and description of the rewards guaranteed for *shaheeds* (martyrs) in paradise).

- Group commitment: The mutual commitment of candidates of suicide operations to carry out the self-sacrificial attacks is a very powerful motivation to stick to the mission despite hesitations and second thoughts. In Hamas and the PIJ, the preparation for suicide attacks is often done in cells, consisting of three to five volunteers. These cells are characterized in the organization as 'martyrdom cells' (*khaliya istishhadiya*), to differentiate them from ordinary 'military cells' (*khaliya askariya*). Members of these cells are mutually committed to each other in this kind of an unbreakable social contract. In fact, the power of a group commitment and inability to break it was also the basis of the willingness of Japanese pilots in the Second World War to fly kamikaze missions. Last letters of kamikazes to their families indicated that while some of them went on their suicidal attack enthusiastically, others regarded it as a duty that they could not evade.

- Personal pledge: Many Palestinian groups adopted a routine of releasing to the media a videotape shortly after a suicide attack. These tapes are also presented by the organization to the suicide's family, after the operation, as a farewell message. Typically, in this tape the suicide is seen holding a rifle (and in Islamic groups a Qur'an in the other hand), declaring his intention to go on the suicide mission. This act is not only meant for propaganda. It is primarily a ceremony intended to establish an irrevocable personal commitment of the candidate to carry

out the suicide attack. This ritual constitutes a point of no return. Having committed himself in front of a television camera (the candidate is also asked at that time to write farewell letters to his family and friends, which are kept by the group alongside with the video tape for release after the completion of the suicide mission), the candidate cannot possibly turn back on his promise. In fact, in both Hamas and the PIJ, from that point on the candidate is formally referred to as 'the living martyr' (*al-shaheed al-hai*). This title is often used by the candidates themselves in the opening sentence of the video statement, which routinely starts with 'I am [the candidate's name], the living martyr...' At this stage, the candidate is presumably in a mental state of a living dead, and has already resigned from life.

1.6.1.1 The Organizational Procedure

The organizational procedure of organizing the suicide operation and training the potential bomber has several parallel steps. The operation itself is planned by the higher echelons of the organization, who design the strategic guidelines and raise economic, organizational and tactical resources. In addition, there are trainers and handlers responsible for recruiting the potential suicide bombers, training them and then dispatching them to their final operation.

The first step in the process is the recruitment of the potential suicide bomber. Sometimes the recruits approach the organization of their own accord. Generally, the organizations prefer to recruit young individuals who are not attached to family or have other commitments.³⁵ Great importance is placed on training the individual; the reason for this is the need to bring a human being to conduct a mission within a short

³⁵ Stern, Jessica. 2003. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. New York: HarperCollins.

period of time whose psychological complexity is far greater than its tactical challenges. The suicide bombers are not older members of the organization itself. Their decision to undertake the suicide operation did not crystallize over a long period of time so that over the years they were gradually able to assume the mental determination necessary to conduct the operation. Many suicide bombers are recruited by the various organizations or are approached for only one purpose, the suicide attack. And this requires prompt and efficient indoctrination and training.

The most important phase of the training process is the indoctrination. This alludes to the process of bringing about change in a whole set of attitudes, opinions and beliefs of a person by means of mental persuasion. In most cases, the process is somewhat different because operatives are 'preaching to the converted'. The recruits are already well aware of the purpose for which they enlisted in the first place. The indoctrination is therefore not to change their behavior but to reinforce an existing inclination within a short period of time (to minimize the risk that they will change their minds). The indoctrination process serves to instill the feeling of a calling and decrease the fear of death. In the last phase of the training, when the suicide bombers are asked to write a farewell letter and leave behind a videotape to loved ones, they are already in a mental state where all their hopes are pinned on the suicide action. From this point on the chances that the suicide bombers will go back on their word or decision are relatively small, because such a step would be condemned by friends in the organization and sometimes even part of the community. It would also harm their self-esteem.

In the next chapter I will examine the roots of the conflict that gave rise to the use of suicide attacks as well as the different Palestinian groups that have played a major role in the struggle against Israel and in the Palestinian political arena.

2 Explaining Palestinian Suicide Bombings

The Palestinian suicide bombings should not be viewed as spontaneous and unprompted acts of terror, unrelated to surrounding events – past and present. In order to gain a better understanding of the motives behind the suicide bombings, it is necessary to examine the context in which they occurred and explore their possible causes.

2.1 *The Context: The Roots of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*

2.1.1 The establishment of the ‘Jewish State’

However desirable it was for the Jewish people, the ‘Jewish State’ was a catastrophe for the Palestinians. And indeed al-Nakba, the Catastrophe, is how they referred to it from then on. In its origins and subsequent expansion, the state of Israel was and remains in essence a colonial enterprise. It may have been different from the nineteenth century European colonization, but it was no less unjust or harsh in its method and impact on the inhabitants of the land it colonized.³⁶ David Hirst, longtime Middle East correspondent for the British newspaper *Guardian*, explains the myth surrounding the conflict in the Middle East succinctly as follows:

The greatest act of violence in the history of the Arab-Israeli struggle – Israel’s ‘War of Independence’ – was in reality a massive act of ethnic cleansing on which the Zionists had been resolved, and girding for, ever since they set foot in Palestine, that the official Zionist narrative surrounding this event is a myth of gigantic proportions: the myth, that is to say, which broadly speaking contends that – as a celebrated maxim had it – Palestine was ‘a land without a people, waiting for a people without a land’; that, in the war which broke out in 1948 the Palestinians fled the country on the orders of their leaders; that the Jewish soldiers, faithful to their ‘purity of arms’, perpetrated no wilful atrocities against them, vanquishing a

³⁶ David Hirst *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East*, Thunder’s Mouth Press/Nation Books, New York, 2003, pp.6-10

*hugely superior coalition of Arab armies bent on Israel's destruction_; and that, after its establishment, the newborn state earnestly sought peace with its neighbours, only resorting to military force in self-defence against on-going, unprovoked Palestinian terror and Arab aggression.*³⁷

The response to this historical falsification came from Israel itself. When Israeli archives were opened in 1978, this presented new opportunities for research into the establishment of the Jewish state. Works like Benni Morris' "Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949"³⁸ and Ilan Pappé's "The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951"³⁹ challenged these 'sacred truths' of Zionism that arose from the 'certainty' that Israel's cause was and always had been just and its behavior above reproach.⁴⁰ The archives made it clear that the Jewish community had never been in danger of annihilation on the eve of the 1948 war. The Arab armies, inferior in numbers, poorly trained and equipped, and operationally incompetent, stood practically no chance of defeating the newly established state.

The Palestinians did not flee because they were following orders from their leaders. They fled because of the deliberate atrocities, terror and violence perpetrated against them by Jewish militias. Furthermore, in the early years of the Israeli state, Israel was not interested in making peace with its neighbors. Its so-called 'retaliatory' policies were in reality brutal and aggressive forms of expansionism that led, again deliberately, to another war. The so-called 'new historians' came to accept that, in fact, the Palestinian version of events – that of deliberate, long-planned ethnic cleansing-- had been the correct one all along.⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid, p. 6-7

³⁸ Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1988.

³⁹ Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951*, I.B. Taurus, London and New York, 1992.

⁴⁰ Pappé, Ilan, 'Post-Zionist Critique on Israel and the Palestinians', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Issue 102, Winter 1997

⁴¹ Pappé, "The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine", Oneworld Publications, 2006

But this reassessment of the origins of the conflict led to no significant consequences. It led to no change in Israel's policies, or less support from the United States. In principle, at least, better understanding of the conflict could have worked in favor of the Palestinians. For until then, in the eyes of the vast majority of the American public, the Palestinians simply never had a history. Their dispossession and dispersal in 1948 had become "an unrecognizable episode", as David Hirst put it, "not only in the sense that it had been forgotten, but that it had been erased from any moral accountancy of the conflict."⁴² The view was that Palestinian 'resistance' was borne out of hatred and the Arab refusal to accept Israel's existence.⁴³ Policy-makers practically ignored the Palestinian dimension of the conflict; all they saw was an Arab-Israeli, inter-state conflict in which the Palestinian refugees were simply a nuisance or the pawns of larger players. A better understanding of the conflict could thus only entail sympathy for the Palestinians as victims with a genuine grievance, as a people with a national cause and a right to 'self-determination' which, in the end, might even take the form of independent statehood.

In light of the 'better understanding' of the real roots of the conflict, there was an ever-growing discrepancy between what the policy-makers should have done and what they actually did do. Israel itself was steadily growing more extreme. In the first thirty years of Israel's existence, the Labor party, which was the (relatively) moderate wing of the Zionist movement, had dominated public life. It had been responsible for the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians, and all the abuses that came with it. But officially, it promoted Western ideals of democracy, social justice, equality and human and civil rights, and wanted to present a civilized image to the world. But

⁴² Hirst, p. 14

⁴³ Kerr, Malcolm, *America's Middle East Policy: Kissinger, Carter and the Future*, IPS Papers 14 (E), Institute for Palestine Studies. 1980, pp8-9.

after the victory of Menachim Begin in the 1977 elections, the Israeli government alternated between Labor and Likud (or coalitions of the two). The Likud party embodied Zionism in its extreme, ultra-nationalist form and did not pay in the least attention to ethical appearances or international opinion. This secular right was reinforced by the religious right, the Israeli/Jewish fundamentalists, who became a powerful new actor in the Israeli political arena.⁴⁴

The United States did not react to the growing militancy and excesses of its protégé with any reproach. And it did not do so because of a parallel process that was happening in Washington at the same time: in both executive and legislature, the metropolitan sponsor was itself being 'Zionized' to an ever-greater degree.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the Palestinians were becoming more and more moderate and accommodating, and did something that was quite exceptional in the history of indigenous peoples' responses to colonialism. They recognized the colonial enterprise –Israel, the Jewish nation state – and its right to exist. They formally surrendered what they were entitled to claim as their right, both from the point of view of international law and established anti-colonial norms: the recovery of their appropriated homeland, the return of the refugees and the dismantling of the entire Zionist-colonial apparatus of immigration, settlement and political control. The victims were not just the Palestinians who had been expelled from their homeland, but the larger Arab community as well, namely the neighboring countries who took them in.

Years later, the heart of peace-seeking Arab consensus was the notion of a Palestinian state to be established in the West Bank and Gaza, the territories Israel had conquered in the 1967 War and occupied ever since. Arab East Jerusalem

⁴⁴ Hirst, p. 14

⁴⁵ Hirst, pp. 15-16

would be the Palestinian state's capital. This was enshrined in the Oslo agreements of 1993. Oslo did not spell it out, but for Palestinians and Arabs, that was its ultimate meaning. The agreement was the climax of Yasser Arafat's moderate stance. In the early sixties, when Arafat first emerged as the leader of the guerrilla organization Fatah, his goal was absolute and uncompromising: the liberation of the whole land of Palestine through 'armed struggle'. Israel would cease to exist and the only Jews who would be permitted to remain would be those who had settled on the land before the Zionist 'invasion'. But ever since the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the peace process that then began in earnest, he had been taking on ever more moderate positions, implying that Israel was there to stay. He began resorting to diplomacy as well as violence to achieve his aims. Indeed, Arafat had very little ability to pursue an armed struggle of any kind from his exile. But in 1987, after years of becoming more and more irrelevant in his Tunisian exile, his own people came to the rescue in the form of the first Intifada.

They were the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, those who were still living in their own homes as well as the refugees from 1948, who were living in camps outside the borders of 'Israel proper', as the original state of 1948 came to be called. Previously, in the earlier years of Palestinian resistance, it had been mainly the 'outsiders' who bore the main burden of the struggle.⁴⁶ The 'insiders' had remained largely quiet, waiting for deliverance by their brothers-in-arms. But with Arafat's setbacks, deliverance never came and did not look like it was ever going to come.

Finally, frustrated and tired of twenty years of occupation, they took matters into their own hands and erupted in what became known as the *Intifada*. This first

⁴⁶ Arafat's guerrillas came mainly from the refugee camps that were located outside *Greater-Israel* of 1967.

Intifada-- unlike the second that broke out in 2000 – was in essence non-violent, or at least unarmed. It became known as the ‘uprising of stones’ and proved to be more effective, in terms of its political impact on Israeli society and the Palestinian community, than the ‘outsiders’ had ever been. It could not be portrayed as ‘terrorism’, which delegitimized any cause, even when just. Furthermore, Israel’s brutal response seriously damaged its international image and reputation. Quite early on during the Intifada, the defense minister of the time, Yitzhak Rabin, had decreed a policy of ‘force, might, beatings’, which was intended to lead to the deliberate and systematic breaking of the bones of bound and shackled men.⁴⁷ The commander of the elite Givati Brigade had ordered his soldiers to ‘break their (the rioters’) legs so they won’t be able to walk and break their hands so they won’t throw stones’.⁴⁸ The practice became so institutionalized in another regiment, the Golani, that medical orderlies were instructed to be present at bone-breakings, considered to be ‘educational’ in purpose, so as to ensure that no ‘irreversible medical damage was caused’.⁴⁹

2.1.2 The Oslo Agreement

On September 13, 1993, Arafat was applauded as world statesman and peace-maker when he shook the hands of Yitzhak Rabin in a ceremony on the White House lawn. It seemed to be an historic reconciliation between two peoples whose attitude towards the other ever since Zionist settlement began had been of complete reciprocal denial. For the first time they recognized the other’s existence,

⁴⁷ Sarid, Yossi, ‘The Night of the Broken Clubs’, Haaretz, 4 May 1989, *Translations from the Hebrew Press* (a monthly collection prepared for many years by the late Israel Shahak).

⁴⁸ *Jerusalem Post*, 3 February 1989, cited in Joost Hiltermann, ‘Human Rights and the Mass Movement: The First Year of the Intifada’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Issue 71, Spring 1999.

⁴⁹ Haaretz, 1 October 1990, Shahak, *Translations*

and their right to self-determination, as peoples on the land of Palestine.⁵⁰ It was the first step in the process of de-colonization to which all European colonial enterprises had submitted. But it was also the last step. It was of course the Palestinians who had made the real concession. For them, historically, it was pure loss against pure Israeli gain. Arafat had formally given up claim to 78 per cent of historic Palestine and had also given up the idea of the 'Right of Return' for almost half the Palestinian people, who had been driven out in 1948 and 1967 and ever since had regarded it as the ultimate goal of the struggle. Arafat himself was to return, along with the high officials of the PLO, to head the 'interim government', or the Palestinian Authority (PA), that was to be established in the territories. But for the Palestinian Diaspora, Arafat's return and that of his cronies meant the final abandonment of theirs. Furthermore, he had given up two of the most powerful weapons in his hands. On the one hand, he renounced violence of all kinds. Indeed, he turned himself into collaborator as much as liberator. For the Israelis, it was their security –not the Palestinians' – that was the be-all-and-end-all of Oslo. And Arafat's job was to supply it on their behalf. Israel's 'right to exist in peace and security' took precedence over the Palestinians' right to continue their struggle for any rights Israel continued to deny them. The whole purpose for the 'strong police force' Arafat was allowed to set up was to 'discipline violators' who might disturb Israeli 'security'. On the other hand, Arafat also abandoned all of the United Nations resolutions which had constituted, at least on paper, the irrefutable, internationally recognized evidence to the justice of the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, Arafat's agreement with Israel was in itself incomplete. He had made these retreats for nothing in return – at least nothing guaranteed.

⁵⁰ It was not entirely reciprocal, however. While the PLO recognized Israel and its right to exist, Israel only recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, not the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Arafat, of course, claimed otherwise. He assured his people that Oslo's five-year 'transitional period' would lead to the end of the whole conflict through a series of negotiations on successive 'interim arrangements' and then so-called 'permanent status' issues such as the refugees' right of return. As the negotiations proceeded and the Israelis withdrew, the Palestine Authority, starting off in part of Gaza and the small West Bank town of Jericho, would expand little by little to incorporate all of the territories. He had supposedly set an unstoppable momentum into motion. Nothing could now hinder the inevitable march towards statehood.

But it was not to be. Given all that Arafat had renounced, the balance of power was now weighted even more in Israel's favor. As Hirst explains, "It became more and more obvious that even the modest goal which he had set for himself, statehood in a very small portion of original Palestine, was unattainable, and that Israel, far from genuinely accepting the historic compromise, was merely exploiting the interminable and acrimonious negotiation to consolidate its hold on its Greater, post 1967 self."⁵¹

With almost complete impunity, Israel persisted in its colonialist expansionist policies, creating yet more Zionist 'facts on the ground' that made an ever greater mockery of the Palestinian state. The establishment of settlements had always been at the heart of these policies. The inevitable consequence: Palestinian dispossession and dispersal. The settlements which had already been established in the occupied territories were illegal under international law and repeatedly condemned as such by the United Nations. For the Palestinians, this meant that, under the Oslo agreement, these settlements were either to be dismantled or fall under eventual Palestinian sovereignty. Thus, upon the signing of Oslo, an end to all

⁵¹ Hirst, p. 23

new settlement activity would have been a reassuring signal that Israel was preparing for a partition, leaving to the Palestinians that part of their homeland to which they had agreed to confine themselves. However, the continuation of the building of settlements was the infuriating indication of the contrary.

Settlement activity continued with a vengeance. Between 1993 and the present day, Labor governments which officially supported Oslo pursued the establishment of 'facts on the ground' with an even greater vigor than Likud governments which, though formally committed to it, were against the Oslo agreement. Between 1967 and 1982, 21,000 settlers had moved into the West Bank and Gaza. In 1990, the figure rose to 76,000. By 2000, the number stood at 213,000, and that did not include the 170,000 who had settled in Arab East Jerusalem, which had long since been annexed to Israel proper.⁵² For the approximately two million Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank, the areas denied to them by the establishment of the settlements, settler roads, by confiscation or military use now amounted to 59 per cent of the whole. Seven thousand settlers controlled 20 per cent of Gaza. Gaza, with 1.1 million Palestinians packed into 140 square kilometers, ranks as the most densely populated territory in the world.⁵³ General Ariel Sharon summed matters up with characteristic bluntness: 'Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we take now will stay ours...'⁵⁴ The Palestinians saw the last remnants of their homeland being confiscated and continued to endure all the humiliations of the occupation. The despair to which this led made an explosion all but inevitable.

⁵² Hirst, p. 24

⁵³ *Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories: A Guide*, The Foundation for Middle East Peace, March 2002.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Agence France Presse, 15 November 1998

2.2 The Political Profiles of the Key Palestinian Groups

This paper is specifically focused on Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Fatah as case studies for the suicide bombings that were conducted during the period under examination, 1993 to 2008. Therefore, before proceeding further on in the analysis, I would like to present a thumbnail sketch of the various Palestinian groups and their interrelationships, operating within Israel and the Palestinian territories.

2.2.1 The PLO

The history of Palestinian nationalism began with the rise of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the mid 1960s as a distinctive nationalistic movement⁵⁵. In the beginning, the Palestinian struggle was a part of the broader Arab identity promoted by Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Syrian Baath Party. However, the war of 1967 and the success of a small group of fighters in inflicting heavy damage to a column of Israeli armed forces created a great sense of pride among Palestinians.

As a result of the subsequent political dynamics, a number of groups including the Fatah, the Syrian sponsored Saiqa, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and its offshoot, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDLFP)⁵⁶, merged under the umbrella of the PLO.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Al-Shuaibi, 1980; Arafat, 1982; Nassar, 1991; Nofal, et al. 1998; Sela and Ma'oz, 1997

⁵⁶ All with diverse ideological orientations.

⁵⁷ Please note that I am using the term PLO here, although after 1994 it became the Palestinian Authority (PA).

2.2.2 Fatah

Among the various groups under the PLO, the Fatah is the largest. Although the PLO is largely secular, the Fatah is distinctly Sunni Islamic. Fatah also carries the largest number of cadres and resources and, during the period under study, was dominated by Yasser Arafat and his group of Palestinians who lived in exile before 1994 and then relocated to the Gaza strip and the West Bank. Fatah's ideology is highly nationalistic, and it quickly followed a course that was different from the interests of other Arab nations. Thus, Fatah considers itself as the most mainstream Palestinian organization and as such, believes it is entitled to "speak for the Palestinian question"⁵⁸.

2.2.3 PFLP

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestinian (PFLP), a Marxist-Leninist group, was founded in 1967 by George Habash. The PFLP considers itself the representative of the working class Palestinians and seeks to liberate all of Palestine and establish a democratic socialist state.⁵⁹ Although the PFLP was one of the original members of the PLO, it withdrew from the umbrella organization in 1993 in protest of Yasser Arafat's peace accord with Israel and joined the Alliance of Palestinian Force to oppose the Oslo Agreement. However, this alliance proved to be short lived. In 1996 the PFLP split from the Alliance and its ideological brethren, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).⁶⁰ After the breakdown of the Oslo peace process and after Arafat took a more radical approach toward Israel, there was a closer cooperation between the PFLP and the PLO.

⁵⁸ Said, 1979: 160.

⁵⁹ Hudson, 1972.

⁶⁰ Although the DFLP, like the PFLP, was a pro-Soviet socialist group, it broke with the latter over its agenda of creating a class struggle among the poor and working class Palestinians.

2.2.4 Hamas and the PIJ

The Palestinian national identity both clashes and yet coexists with its other, Islamic identity. While the PLO was following a mostly secular course and enjoying increasing popularity, the prospect of a peaceful settlement with the Jewish state brought about disagreements within the Palestinian community. It set the mainly secular and increasingly accommodating PLO against those with a strong Islamic identity who did not believe in acceding even an inch of Palestinian land to Israel. Thus, challenges to the PLO and Arafat came primarily from two groups, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. In January 1988 the PLO and the leadership of the *Intifada* movement issued a fourteen-point declaration calling for a Palestinian state to coexist with Israel. A month later Hamas was officially founded.⁶¹

2.2.4.1 The PIJ

Although both Hamas and the PIJ trace their origins back to the Muslim Brotherhood movement of Egypt, there is a clear distinction between the two groups' priorities, particularly regarding the question of Jihad. The Muslim Brotherhood, like many other fundamentalist Islamic movements, saw Jihad as a general duty of all Muslims. It proposed that first "proper Islam" should be established throughout the Muslim world. Only after this primary goal is achieved, should violent Jihad be directed against Israel. In contrast, the irredentist Hamas movement switched the two priorities.⁶² Hamas maintained that Jihad should first be directed at liberating all of Palestine. Then the Muslims could direct their attention to the goal of restoring the "true faith" to the rest of the Islamic world. However, both groups absolutely rejected

⁶¹ Before this date, Hamas was more of a charitable organization, serving the poor Palestinians primarily in the Gaza Strip.

⁶² Mundra, 2003

any political arrangement that would result in the relinquishment of any part of Palestine.

A number of small Islamic Palestinian groups have been active under the general title of the PIJ (*Harkat al-Jihad al-Islami al-Filastini*); among them the Fathi Shqaqi faction is the most prominent. These groups are inspired more by the Pan-Islamic ideology of restoring Islam to its old glory than by the nationalistic fervor of creating a Palestinian state in Israel. Nevertheless, they view Israel as the “Zionist Jewish” state and as the first target of their collective wrath. Dismayed by the lack of radicalism of the Islamic Brotherhood, specifically toward Israel, Fathi Abd al-Aziz Shqaqi, a Palestinian born in the Gaza Strip, established a separate Jihadi umbrella organization around 1979 along with Abd al-Aziz Odah and Bashir Musa. The group was particularly inspired by the revolutionary success of Aytollah Khomeini in Iran. Because of the PIJ’s emphasis on Pan-Islamic ideology, the group maintained close contact with other radical groups in the Palestinian occupied territories as well in Syria, Lebanon and Iran. Over the years, the PIJ developed its follower base among intellectuals and students, primarily in the Gaza Strip. The assassination of Shqaqi in October 1995 in Malta⁶³ stripped the PIJ of its charismatic leader and, after Hamas switched tactics to employing suicide attacks, the two groups began cooperating closely with each other.⁶⁴

2.2.4.2 Hamas

This section is dedicated to a more extensive analysis of Hamas, as a key player in the conflict and in Palestinian internal affairs. I will illustrate how Hamas’

⁶³ Although the murder of Mr. Shqaqi remains unsolved, there is a strong suspicion that it was the work of the Israeli Intelligence agency, Mossad.

⁶⁴ See, <http://www.ict.org.il/>.

ideology not only linked its political objectives with religious rhetoric but also how the latter was shaped both by pan-Islamic concerns as well as specific Palestinian circumstances. This section also examines how Hamas utilized political Islam to construct a unique identity for itself, which in turn allowed it to adopt the strategy of jihad and martyrdom.

The term Hamas is an abbreviation of *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya* (Islamic resistance movement). It emerged as an Islamic alternative to the PLO during the first *Intifada* uprising in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Hamas' ideology is contrary to the secular character of the PLO⁶⁵ and is opposed to its intention of creating a separate Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.⁶⁶ By putting the issue into a religious Islamic context, Hamas was able to successfully create a political movement that directly challenged the power and authority of the PLO and Arafat. A further reason for the rise of Hamas is the frustration felt by the Palestinian populace regarding the inability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to deliver a transparent, democratic, and efficient administration. Furthermore, since the peace process began in 1993, the PA was viewed by the international community as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. As the successive Israeli governments negotiated with the PA, Hamas saw itself being increasingly marginalized.⁶⁷ Therefore, Hamas maintained a delicate balance between its proclaimed political radicalism, its numerous social welfare programs, and its opposition to the PA through the use of controlled violence. By doing so, it

⁶⁵ Article 1 of its Charter states, "The basis of the Islamic Resistance Movement is Islam. From Islam it derives its ideas and its fundamental precepts and views of life, the universe, and humanity; and it judges all its actions according to Islam and is inspired by Islam to correct its errors." (Mishal and Sela, 2000, 177).

⁶⁶ Article 11 states: "the Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic *Waqf* [endowed] to all Muslim generations until the day of resurrection. It is not right to give it up or any part of it. Neither a single Arab state nor all Arab states, neither a king nor a president, not all the kings and presidents, nor any organization or all of them – be they Palestinian or Arab – have such authority, because the land of Palestine is an Islamic *Waqf* [endowed] to all Muslim generations until the day of resurrection." (ibid: 181).

⁶⁷ Kusum Mundra, "Suicide Bombing As a Strategic Instrument of Protest: An Empirical Investigation", unpublished seminar paper submitted at University of California, 2003

not only confronted the Israeli government but also challenged the PA's dominance among the Palestinians. In this context and process, and most likely also inspired by Hezbollah in Lebanon, the tactic of using suicide bombings emerged as a strategic weapon for the group. Hamas learned to use them to further its own political agendas. In Mishal and Sela's (2000: 3) comprehensive study of Hamas and its ideology, the authors point out that: "...Hamas' decision-making processes have been markedly balanced, combining realistic considerations with traditional beliefs and arguments, emphasizing visionary goals but also immediate needs." The Hamas leadership orchestrated the sacrifices of their young followers by preaching in the mosques and publishing leaflets and directives. The social influence, which affects nearly every aspect of life in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, also played an important role. However, the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam is not a political ideology particular only of Hamas. In fact, its professed nationalism is in direct conflict with the pan-Islamic transnational identity professed in the Qur'an,⁶⁸ where all other identities are rejected in favor of an all-encompassing *ummah* (the Islamic community). Hence, Hamas' mixture of the two identities (Palestinian and Islamic) came in conflict with a stricter interpretation of Islam. This came from the group, the PIJ.

A survey of Hamas' Covenant (*mithaq*), leaflets, wall graffiti as well as official statements demonstrates its set of concerns. These include: (i) the challenge of Zionism and the Jewish-Israeli state; (ii) the crisis within both the Palestinian and wider Muslim community and concurrently the challenge posed by the secular nationalist opposition; (iii) the sanctity of Palestinian land and the foreign occupation in Jerusalem; (iv) the defense of Palestinian national aspirations as a legitimate

⁶⁸ Huband, 1998

Islamic goal and the establishment of a Palestinian Islamic state; (v) the declaration and justification of jihad as a legitimate strategy to accomplish specifically nationalist goals; and (vi) the defense of martyrdom as a legitimate Islamic tool of struggle within this jihad against oppression and occupation. These six themes are crucial components in Hamas' construction of the rhetoric of jihad and martyrdom within the occupied territories.

Hamas' rhetoric does not make a distinction between Judaism, Zionism and Israel and tends to use the terms 'Jews' and 'Zionists' synonymously and interchangeably. The state of Israel is therefore regarded as the product of Judaism. Consequently, Hamas believes the only way to combat it is by establishing an Islamic state, as that alone possesses the strength to confront and counter all other faiths and ideologies⁶⁹. At its very core Hamas' ideology emphasizes the 'Islamic essence' of the Palestinian cause (*Islamiyat al-qadiyya al-Filastiniyya*) and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁷⁰. For Hamas the conflict is not only a confrontation between nationalisms but also between faiths and as such represents an unbridgeable dichotomy. One leaflet addressed to Israel states: "Get your hands off our people, our cities, our camps and our villages. Our struggle with you is a contest of faith, existence and life"⁷¹.

Secondly, Hamas is also concerned with the oppressive occupation faced by the Palestinian community. Hamas, very much like the Muslim Brotherhood, believes that the Islamisation of the Palestinian community is crucial to Palestinian liberation. However, for Hamas, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, liberation is attainable only

⁶⁹ See for example: Meir Litvak, 'Religious and Nationalist Fanaticism: The Case of Hamas' in Matthew Hughes and Gaynor Johnson (eds.), *Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age* (London: Frank Cass, 2005); Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence in the Modern Era* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

⁷⁰ Meir Litvak, 'Religious and Nationalist Fanaticism: The Case of Hamas' in Matthew Hughes and Gaynor Johnson (eds.), *Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age* (London: Frank Cass, 2005)

⁷¹ Undated Hamas leaflet from the first Intifada in Shaul Mishal, 'Paper War – Words Behind Stones: The Intifada Leaflets' in *The Jerusalem Quarterly* 51 (Summer 1989)

through a combination of *tabligh wa da'wa* (Islamic propagation) and jihad. Furthermore, Hamas believes that because Palestine is central to Islam it can only be recovered as an Islamic state by true Muslims. As such the secular national movement is lost and doomed to fail in its intended goal. Hence: "...despite our respect for the Palestinian Liberation Organization ... we cannot exchange the Islamic nature of Palestine to adopt the secular ideology because the Islamic nature of Palestinian issue is part and parcel of our religion, and whoever neglects part of his religion is surely lost"⁷². By using the language of political Islam in this manner, Hamas is not only demarcating its own political space but also trying to gain an upper hand by identifying the secular opposition as misguided and an obstacle to Palestinian liberation.

Third, Hamas stresses that the land of Palestine is sacred for all Muslims for a number of reasons. Most importantly, God chose the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem (*Al-Quds*) as the site of the Prophet Muhammad's ascension to heaven (*al-Isra' wal-Miraj*) and also as the first *qibla* (direction to face during prayer). Hence, Hamas repeatedly refers to the sanctity of the mosque and Jerusalem and stresses that the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem is an affront not only for the Palestinians but also for the wider Arab and Islamic world.⁷³ Hamas uses this to identify the Palestinian cause with broader Islamic concerns and rally support from the Arab world: "...The problem of the liberation of Palestine relates to three spheres: the Palestinian circle; the Arab circle; and the Islamic circle"⁷⁴. At the same time, however, Hamas is also aware of its isolation and the lack of support from the Muslim world. It thus also rebukes the Arab and Muslim masses for abandoning the

⁷² Excerpts from The Hamas Charter, Article 27, August 1988 in Khaled Hroub, opt. cit.

⁷³ Hamas Communiqué No. 4, dated 1 October 2000 in Yonah Alexander, *Palestinian Religious Terrorism: Hamas and Islamic Jihad* (Ardsey, New York: Transnational Publishers Inc., 2002)

⁷⁴ Excerpts from The Hamas Charter, Article 14, August 1988 in Khaled Hroub, opt. cit.

Palestinian cause: “It is a shame on Arabs and Muslims to stand idle by vis-à-vis the daily and continuous extermination of an Arab, Islamic people on the land of *al-Isra’ wal-Miraj* (*the ascension of the Prophet Muhammed*)! There is no excuse for the Nation for not shouldering its duty towards Palestine and its people”⁷⁵.

Hamas’ adoption of a nationalist stance can be seen as being rooted in the competition with the secular national movement, whose rhetoric was based on popular notions of self-determination, independence and democracy. Yet nationalism is at odds with the traditional Islamic concept of *dar al-Islam*.⁷⁶ So Hamas had to first create a narrative with which it could justify Palestinian Islamic nationalism as a legitimate Islamic goal. It did so by creating links between the Islamic sanctity of Palestinian land and Palestinian nationalism. In creating this narrative Hamas successfully retained its essence as an Islamic organization while at the same time merging its Islamic identity with a nationalist stance. This allowed it to compete with the PLO and the PA. In positioning itself as a political group whose nationalism encompassed the “materialistic, humanistic and geographical ties” of other nationalisms *as well as* “divine reasons”⁷⁷, Hamas developed a unique identity in the Palestinian political arena over the past twenty years.

2.2.4.2.1 Jihad and Istishhad

This Islamisation of Palestinian nationalism by Hamas sheds light on how it constructed the call to jihad and martyrdom as a legitimate course of action in the struggle against Israel. Hamas’ stress upon the strategy of jihad can be traced

⁷⁵ Hamas Communiqué dated 1 August 2001 in Yonah Alexander, opt. cit.

⁷⁶ An islamic term used by Muslim scholars to refer to those countries where Muslims can practice their religion freely.

⁷⁷ Excerpts from The Hamas Charter, Article 12, August 1988 in Khaled Hroub, opt. cit.

throughout its literature. Hamas also illustrates its acceptance of the Islamic principle that jihad may be waged by multiple means – both military and non-military.⁷⁸

Hamas places martyrdom and sacrifice at the very centre of its strategy of military jihad and portrays suicide attacks, or ‘martyrdom operations’ as they are called, as the epitome of martyrdom. However, because suicide (*intihar*) is forbidden in Islamic theology, Hamas avoids this pitfall by coining its suicide attacks ‘martyrdom operations’ (*amaliyat istishhadiyya*). This is because the notion of self-sacrifice (*ishtishad*) has been lauded in Qur’anic teachings as not only permitted but also desirable. The shahid, unlike the suicide, is honored and guaranteed a place in paradise for all eternity⁷⁹. Hamas emphatically stresses this difference between *intihar* and *ishtishad*. Suicide is shameful, committed by the weak, despairing and depressed. But martyrdom is the beginning of hope and deliverance and is a path chosen by the strong-willed and noble, who are therefore worth emulating. For example, according to the former second-in-command of Hamas’ political wing Rantisi, if a Muslim wants to “kill himself because he’s sick of being alive, that’s suicide. But if he wants to sacrifice his soul in order to defeat the enemy and for God’s sake – well, then he’s a martyr”⁸⁰.

The narrative of martyrdom constructed by Hamas was a crucial component of its military strategy. Hamas substantiated its claim for the necessity of sacrifice in Palestine by referring to the many Qur’anic verses and traditions that mention jihad and martyrdom. It thus urged the Palestinians to fight persecution and injustice on

⁷⁸ See The Hamas Charter, Articles 15 and 30, August 1988 in Khaled Hroub, opt. cit.

⁷⁹ See for example: Christopher Reuter, *My Life is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004); Prof. Abdul Hadi Palazzi ‘Orthodox Islamic Perceptions of Jihad and Martyrdom’ and Reuven Paz ‘The Islamic Legitimacy of Suicide Terrorism’ both in *Countering Suicide Terrorism: An International Conference* (Herzliya, Israel: The International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Centre Herzliya, Feb. 20-23, 2000)

⁸⁰ *Al-Hayat* interview with Rantisi conducted on 25 April 2001 as cited in Christopher Reuter, opt. cit., p.123

the path of God and to never fear death, as those killed in battle are rewarded by God. Some verses mentioned in Hamas' leaflets include:

Surah 2:154 - "Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the Presence of their Lord"

Surah 3:139 - "Fight them! Allah will chastise them at your hands, and He will lay them low and give you victory over them, and He will heal the breast of folk who are believers"

Surah 8:60 - "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies"

Surah 14:52 - "And what though ye be slain in Allah's way or die therein? Surely pardon from Allah and mercy are better than all that they amass. What though ye be slain or die, when unto Allah ye are gathered?"⁸¹

Hamas elevated the position of the martyrs in Palestinian society by honoring them and their families after their deaths. By reinforcing that the strength of the Palestinians lies in their willingness and readiness to sacrifice themselves in a holy struggle, Hamas positioned the courageous and heroic Palestinian martyr who embraces death with a smile against the frightened Israeli who is instead scared of dying. Hamas' first communiqué thus asserts:

"..during one week, hundreds of wounded and tens of martyrs offered their lives in the path of God to uphold their nation's glory and honour, to restore our rights in our homeland, and to elevate God's banner in the land. This is a true expression of the spirit of sacrifice and redemption that characterises our people. This spirit has robbed the Zionists of their sleep and rocked their foundations, even as it proved to the whole world that a people that welcomes death shall never die. Let the Jews understand that ... our people's perseverance and steadfastness shall overcome their oppression and arrogance. Let them know that their policy of violence shall beget naught but a more powerful counter policy by our sons and youths who love the eternal life in heaven more than our enemies love life... The Intifada is here to convince them that Islam is the solution and the alternative. Let the reckless settlers beware: Our people know the way of sacrifice and martyrdom and are generous in this regard...Let them understand that violence breeds nothing but violence and that death bestows but death"⁸².

⁸¹ All verses are quoted in Yonah Alexander, opt cit. and Shaul Mishal and Reuben Aharoni, opt. cit.

⁸² First Hamas Communiqué dated 14 December 1987 in Khaled Hroub, opt. cit.

Many Hamas leaflets from the late 1990s end with the slogans: “And it is Jihad until victory or martyrdom”, “Glory and immortality for our martyrs” or “Victory for our Mujahid people” – reflecting both the growing militarization and religiosity of society as well as the increasing centrality of martyrdom in the landscape of conflict. Indeed this growing importance of the martyrdom rhetoric is most evident when compared with the fact that Hamas leaflets from the first Intifada tend to end with the slogans “Allah is great, praise to God”, “Let the uprising continue until victory” or at the most “And it is Jihad until victory”. Thus even a cursory analysis of Hamas’ martyrdom rhetoric shows a significant shift with literature from the first Intifada containing only generic references to martyrdom and martyrs. However, by the mid-1990s this rhetoric is developed into a sophisticated narrative which not only extends legitimacy to suicide operations as a means of resisting occupation but also provides forceful propaganda for the organization’s military activities by listing the names of martyrs as well as detailed accounts of Israeli attacks and the organization’s vows of revenge. The leaflets and wall graffiti ululate the deeds of martyrs through elaborate eulogies and describe in detail the costs and casualties that were inflicted upon the enemy in the name of God. Of course, there is a constant reaffirmation of the martyr’s attainment of eternal life and his/her place in paradise as one of God’s favorites.

“Our heroic Palestinian people: a star has fallen from the skies of Palestine but its splinters would burn the heart of Zionists...Who will deter the angered (avenging) heroes? Who will dare halt the blood-painted revenge? ...The martyr commander was the knight that annoyed occupation; its soldiers and settlers in all areas of Palestine and his students have learnt from him the arts of combat and graduated from his school with distinction. They realise that the time has come now to play their role and teach the Zionists unforgettable lessons so that they [the Israelis] would know that if a knight had fallen a group of cavaliers would show up after him...the heinous crime perpetrated by the Zionist terrorist leaders in assassinating commander of the Qassam Brigades the martyr

Mujahid hero Mahmoud Abu Hannoud and his brothers Ayman and Ma'moon Hashayka will not pass unpunished...we in the IRM...bear with pride and glory the glad tidings of the martyrdom of commander Mahmoud Abu Hannoud and his brothers, a thing that they have always yearned for after he and his brothers managed to survive the enemy's various assassination and arrest attempts for years. We vow before Allah to remain faithful to blood of the martyr and all martyrs of our people and we will remain insisting on resistance until end and ejection of occupation from our lands sacrificing our souls and blood as cheap price along that road. And it is a Jihad until either victory or martyrdom"⁸³.

Hamas' spiritual leader Sheikh Yassin voiced this purposeful legitimization of martyrdom operations in 2002 when he said: "Our only initiative against the enemy is resistance, until we liberate our homeland...The Palestinians have the right to use all their weapons against this enemy, including the martyr death attacks. If we are asked to stop these operations, Israel must be forced to first stop its occupation of Palestinian lands. If the Israeli enemy wants to decide for me how to handle opposition against him that would no longer qualify as opposition."⁸⁴

Some of Hamas' leaflets and directives also carried details of geographical areas of operation, for example in a December 2001 leaflet Hamas declared a *hudna* (unilateral ceasefire) on martyrdom operations within Israeli territories: "We declare a suspension of martyrdom operations in the 1948 occupied territories and a stoppage of mortar fire until further notice. We affirm that all Hamas cadres especially the Qassam Brigades should abide by this matter until Allah ordains whatever He wills."⁸⁵

Apart from the organizational rhetoric of Hamas, individual beliefs and sentiments in the letters and wills written by the 'living martyrs' were widely publicized by Hamas. Individual wills and last testimonies were either in the form of a

⁸³ Hamas Communiqué dated 24 November 2001 in Yonah Alexander, opt. cit.

⁸⁴ Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Violence in the Modern Era* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 146

⁸⁵ Hamas Communiqué dated 21 December 2001 in Yonah Alexander, opt. cit.

document or in the form of a 'living will', i.e. a videotape. A significant number of these wills reflect amongst other emotions a deep profession of faith. In a typical letter the martyr urges his/her family and community not to mourn their passing but to rejoice and celebrate their martyrdom as if it were their wedding day. They stress that through this act of martyrdom they have attained eternal life and the ability to intercede with Allah on their family's behalf. The martyrs also ask their families to pray and fast regularly and be good Muslims. The last will and testament of the suicide bomber Hamed Abu Hejleh illustrates some of these elements:

"Rejoice, for I have fulfilled my wish and achieved martyrdom in the path of God with the help of the determined holy fighters...know that the Prophet Muhammed, peace be upon him, has said that the martyr intercedes with God on behalf of seventy of his family members...My last wish to you my family is that none of you should weep in my procession to heaven. Indeed, distribute dates and ululate in the wedding of martyrdom. I conclude by saying we shall meet soon, God willing, in a paradise prepared for those who fear the Lord, the size of which spans heaven and earth."⁸⁶

Muhammad Hazza al-Ghoul who executed the 18 June 2006 bus bombing at the Patt junction in Jerusalem killing twenty people and injuring fifty-two wrote similar words in his last will and testament:

"The triumphant outcome will be to those who fear the Lord, but this will not happen until we champion God and His religion...The martyr intercedes on behalf of seventy of his family members, so I request of Him that you be from among them. I ask you, for God's sake, not to cry for my absence, for we will meet shortly in Paradise, God willing."⁸⁷

Mohammed Hafez in his 2003 study of Palestinian suicide bombers locates a certain quality of personal and societal redemption in such statements. He points out how the act of martyrdom provides individual redemption because it is a privilege

⁸⁶ For the full text of the will see Mohammed M. Hafez, *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006), pp. 91-92

⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 90-91

accorded only to committed believers. Simultaneously he stresses that the act also attempts to redeem the society's failure to act righteously.

Other than faith and religious responsibility a number of other themes can be located in last testimonials and 'living wills'. In many cases the bomber calls upon the both the Palestinian masses and the wider Muslim community to follow the example of jihad set by themselves. The last will of Ismail Masawabi from Khan Yunis, who blew himself up at the edge of a nearby Israeli settlement killing two Israeli soldiers, states: "...In Paradise I shall be immortal, so you should be glad that I am there. To all those who have loved me, I say: don't weep, for your tears won't give me peace. This is the way I have chosen. So, if you have really loved me, carry on and carry my weapon ..."88

One videotape of a Hamas operative's last will shows him holding hands with his mother, who says: "I am not losing you because you are going to paradise...Our message to the Israeli occupiers and killers is that this is our land. And our sons that we love are no more dear to us than our land. Their blood will redeem it."89 Martyrdom operations thus seem to be regarded, even at the individual level, as religious tools that can be implemented to achieve explicitly political ends. In this way the single act of martyrdom becomes a mechanism to end injustice and simultaneously seek liberation and religious redemption.

What becomes clear is that the individual wills reflect the political and religious rhetoric constructed by Hamas in its organizational literature. The end result was the successful construction of the belief that martyrdom operations serve

⁸⁸ Christopher Reuter, opt. cit, p. 91

⁸⁹ Ira Sharkansky, *Coping With Terror: An Israeli Perspective* (Maryland and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003), p. 58

the cause of God and the nation.⁹⁰ Hamas was then able to channel this manufactured belief into conducting its suicide bombing campaigns.

2.2.5 The Groups' Use of Suicide Bombings Prior to the Al-Aqsa Intifada

The Oslo Peace Accords helped strengthen the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and this greatly threatened its ideological rivals. In response, both Hamas and the PIJ increased their attacks against Israel, including suicide attacks. Suicide attacks succeeded in inflicting great damage not only on Israeli politics but also, for the first time, on Israeli citizens - the number of lives lost suddenly turning against the Israelis.⁹¹ Facing this unprecedented level of violence, Israel reacted brutally by imposing new punitive measures based on collective punishment. Israel's disproportionate use of force and policy of collective punishment in turn further enraged and radicalized a large segment of the Palestinian population, who lost any hope of a peaceful coexistence with the Jewish state.

This process of disenchantment was also intensified by the corruption and incompetence of the PA to set up an efficient government. Finally, its inability to secure an independent Palestinian state from the increasingly inflexible Labor Party government of Ehud Barak showed how futile the cooperative strategy of the PA and how fundamentally weak the Oslo peace process really were.⁹² The heightened

⁹⁰ Singh, Rashmi. "Political Islam and Suicide Operations in the Israeli-Palestinian Context: The Case of Hamas" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention, Hilton Chicago, CHICAGO, IL, USA, Feb 28, 2007* . 2008-10-09
<http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p180049_index.html>

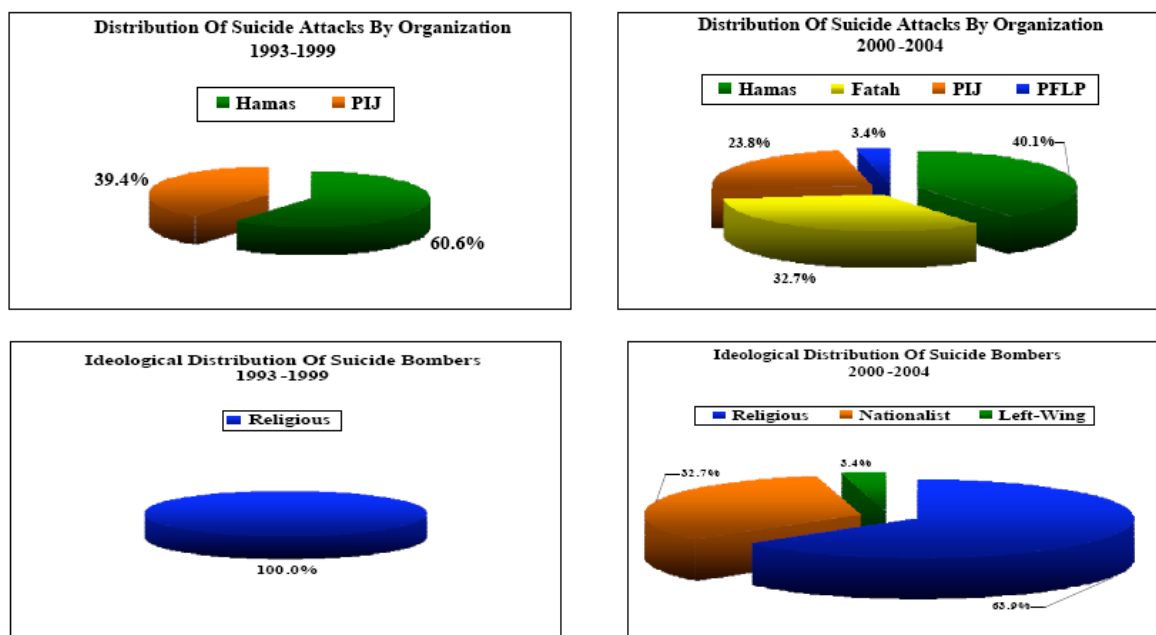
⁹¹ Radlauer, 2002.

⁹² Although the PLO had officially eschewed violence against Israel, the entire time period saw continued armed attacks by the PLO affiliated groups, although they did not stage any suicide attack before the peace process came to an end.

tension created by Ariel Sharon's provocative walk-about of the Al Aqsa Mosque and the subsequent demonstrations and brutal suppression by Israeli forces that resulted in dozens of Palestinian deaths dealt the final death knell to the peace process. Ehud Barak's defeat and the election of Ariel Sharon was the formal end of the process of a negotiated peace. Recognizing that they might be losing the global recognition of being the sole representative of the Palestinian people as well as losing political clout among its constituents, a number of factions within the PLO began to follow the path Hamas and the PIJ had already drawn and decided to also carry out the most successful of the violent strategies, suicide bombings.⁹³

By the time it became obvious that the Oslo peace process had failed, the armed wing of Fatah, the Tanzim, began its campaign of suicide bombings. This paramilitary wing of Fatah played a major role in October 2000 when it was becoming apparent that peace talks were at a dead end, and Sharon decided to make a symbolic visit to the *Haram-al-Sharif*. The breakdown of the Camp David meeting, coupled with Sharon's provocative affront to the Islamic as well as Palestinian identity, saw the formation of yet another PLO affiliated radical group, the Martyrs of Al Aqsa (or the Al-Aqsa Brigades). Many of the leaders of this group were the former youths of the first *Intifada* of 1987. Along with the Tanzim and the Al-Aqsa Brigades, the PFLP redoubled its efforts to achieve the dual goals of retaliating the actions by the Israeli government as well as attempting to undermine the growing influence of Hamas and the PIJ, especially among the disaffected youth.

⁹³ By this time, an overwhelming portion of the Palestinians was supportive of the suicide attacks against the Jewish state (see Luft, 2002).

Figure 1⁹⁴**The Changing Characteristics of Palestinian Suicide Bombings**

This brief sketch of the Palestinian groups must also include a mention of the Syrian and Iranian backed Shiite group, Hezbollah (the Party of God). Established during the Lebanese political chaos of 1982 with the ideological guidance of Ayatollah Khomeini, Hezbollah quickly asserted its status through a series of spectacular suicide attacks. As early as the mid-1980s, Fathi al-Shiqaqi, the assassinated leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, advocated the use of “martyrdom operations” to counterbalance Israel’s superior military capabilities. The suicide attacks in Lebanon conducted by Hezbollah and other nationalist factions against Israel and western multinational forces during the 1980s had demonstrated the effectiveness of this tactic. Yet cooperation between Hamas and Islamic Jihad on the one hand, and Hezbollah in Lebanon on the other, didn’t take place until 1992-1993. On December 17, 1992, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had 415 ‘Islamic

⁹⁴ http://www.eisenhowerseries.com/pdfs/final_05/pedahzur_ppt.pdf

activists' deported from the West Bank and Gaza into southern Lebanon after five Israeli servicemen were killed. For much of 1993, they were forced to live in makeshift camps in the hillsides of southern Lebanon. The Lebanese government refused to take them in and Israel refused to allow them to return. This opened the way for Hezbollah, who provided them with material and support, and in the process, many of these activists and leaders held discussions with Hezbollah regarding strategies and tactics for resistance.⁹⁵

After the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993 between the PLO and Israel, most of those expelled returned to the territories. However, Hamas and Islamic Jihad faced a dilemma. On the one hand, they felt threatened by the Oslo accords as this might marginalize them politically after they had achieved national prominence during the first Intifada from 1987-1993. They did not want to join the PA because such a move would mean they would have to recognize Israel and accept a two-state solution, which was contradictory to their Islamist outlook. On the other hand, Hamas and Islamic Jihad could not simply conduct suicide bombings against Israel without unleashing repression from the PA. Under the Oslo accords, the latter was obliged to fight anti-Israeli terrorism stemming from areas under Palestinian control. In fact, the PA did exercise its repressive powers against militant groups in 1994, 1995 and 1996 after suicide attacks threatened to derail the peace process.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

⁹⁶ *Manufacturing Human Bombs* March 2005, v. 2, p. 9

2.2.6 The First Suicide Attacks

Strategically, Hamas and Islamic Jihad began to link their suicide attacks against Israelis to specific actions taken by Israel. The first such action came in February 1994, when Baruch Goldstein, a Jewish settler from New York, massacred 29 Muslim worshipers while they were kneeling in prayer at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. Hamas avenged the killings by dispatching two suicide bombers in April of that same year, killing approximately 13 and injuring over 70 people.⁹⁷ A similar action occurred in January 1996, when Israeli intelligence assassinated Yahya Ayyash, famously known as “the engineer.” Ayyash was the chief bomb maker for Hamas responsible for a number of suicide bombings. His assassination⁹⁸ was a shock to Hamas, which then unleashed four suicide attacks, resulting in the deaths of approximately 57 and injury of over 130 Israelis. The PA found it difficult to take repressive measures against Hamas when the group appeared to be defending the Palestinian people. Had it done so, the PA would have risked a civil war.

Suicide attacks carried out by Hamas and the PIJ after the Oslo agreement of 1993 did have a significant impact on the peace process. Large segments in the Israeli public interpreted the suicide bombings as an indication that the Palestinian Authority under Yasser Arafat’s leadership was doing nothing to stop the attacks against Israel and that the Palestinians did not genuinely want peace. This perception among the Israeli public led to a policy change in government. In the electoral campaign of early 1996, Labor Party Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, was at first leading by about 20 percentage points. But after a series of suicide attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, right-wing candidate Benjamin Netanyahu defeated Peres

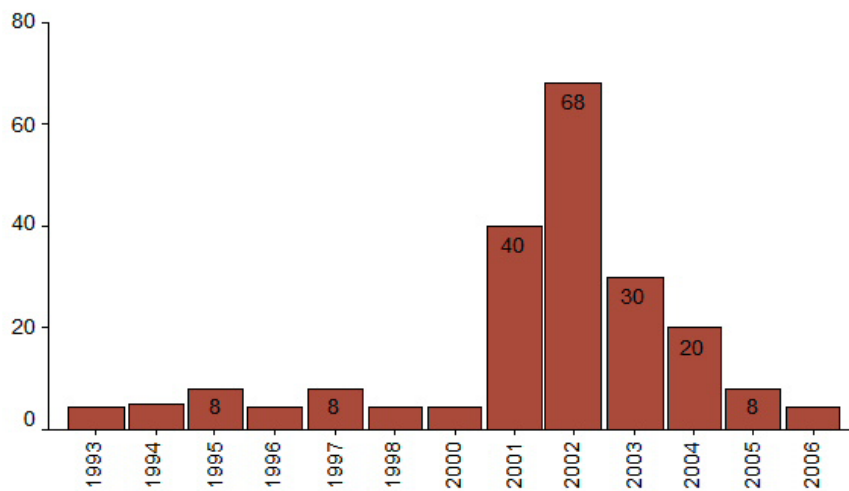
⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ with a hidden bomb in a mobile phone, which indicated a betrayal by close aides

by a small margin. The resulting policy change froze the peace process for a long time. Thus one could say that the suicide attacks contributed to bringing the peace process to a halt.

Figure 2⁹⁹

Number of Palestinian Suicide Attacks by Year, 1993-2006



During the Oslo peace process years – 1993 to 2000 -- most Palestinians rejected the suicide attacks against Israeli civilians. This changed during the Al-Aqsa Intifada, when the overwhelming majority supported such attacks. For instance, in a March 1996 poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, only 21.1 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza expressed support for suicide bombings. The highest support for suicide bombings during the peace process years never exceeded 35.5 percent, which was in September 1997, when Benjamin Netanyahu, the hawkish Likud leader, was in office. In contrast, an October 2003 poll by the same research centre found that 74.5 percent of Palestinians support suicide bombings¹⁰⁰. Only in March 2005, after a mutual

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Manufacturing Human Bombs March 2005, v. 2, p. 10

ceasefire was agreed upon by the Palestinians and Israelis, did support for suicide bombings decline substantially: 29.1 percent continued to support them while 67.1 percent opposed them.¹⁰¹ This was in direct relation to the political events occurring at that particular time the polls were taken, which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

2.2.7 The Second Intifada

Even before the second Intifada, other Islamic Palestinian resistance groups began to engage in suicide bombing attacks, albeit on a limited and infrequent basis. Not until the start of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in late September 2000 did suicide bombing attacks become more frequent and consistent. Then, suicide attacks were no longer confined to Islamic religious groups. Secularist groups also adopted this tactic in their resistance activities against an increasingly firmly established Israeli occupation. In other words, this tactic acquired more prevalence and popularity in Palestinian resistance, to the extent that it greatly characterized Palestinian-Israeli relations in the following years.

The second Intifada came right after the Camp David summit conference of July 2000. The interim phases of the Oslo agreement had come to a standstill, and, with President Clinton's blessing, then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak laid before Arafat and his negotiating team a take-it-or-leave-it compromise. In return for 'the most generous offer' Israel had ever made, the Palestinians had to give up all further claims.¹⁰² It may have been Israel's 'most generous offer', but considering what Israel had 'offered' before, it could in no way be compared, historically, to what the

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Hirst, p.25

Palestinians had renounced at Oslo. Ehud Barak actually not only demanded much more than the 78 per cent of original Palestine which Arafat had offered him, he also sought a number of other ideological or 'security-related' gains, which would essentially reduce the Palestinian state to a dismal, powerless parody of itself. What Barak was prepared to 'give' to the Palestinians was in reality far less than Israel claimed they were (90-95%), because it always left out certain areas, such as the municipality of East Jerusalem, which amounted to 5.4 per cent of the whole.¹⁰³ In order to keep most of the illegal settlements under its sovereignty, Israel would have to annex strategically important territories which would cut deep into the Palestinian state, dividing it into three disconnected segments. So every time Palestinians wanted to cross or transport goods from one segment to the other, they would have to pass through Israeli roads, which Israel could close at will. This and other extortions and humiliations would have made many of the worst aspects of the Israeli occupation permanent. Camp David collapsed without any agreement at all.

Within two months, the second Intifada broke out. It was triggered by Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which was meant to embarrass his political rival at the time, Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and was an attempt to win over the Israeli public by highlighting his courage and bravery.¹⁰⁴ The second Intifada was in coming anyway and, in essence, it was a spontaneous, popular revolt directed against Israel's continued occupation, and at the realization that Oslo could never end it. It was also implicitly directed against Arafat and his Palestinian Authority, which had so adamantly collaborated in upholding that fiction. It was also in response to Israel's measures of widespread killings, mass arrests, confiscation of lands and increased house demolitions. And it was in response to the crippling of

¹⁰³ Walid Khalidi, *The Prospects for Peace in the Middle East*, speech delivered in London, 8 October 2002.

¹⁰⁴ Ariel Merari 'Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism' in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*.

Palestinian economy and chokehold on people's everyday lives at the numerous Israeli checkpoints during the arduous seven-year political process of Oslo. All that was needed to stir the already tense environment was just a trigger. The Oslo Accords as well as further Palestinian-Israeli agreements were put on hold or scrapped altogether. The Palestinian voices who strived for conciliation were silenced by the daily confrontation with oppressive Israeli occupation forces and policies. The idea of negotiations within Palestinian society was overshadowed by the determination to end the occupation, by a variety of different resistance operations. It is also possible that the Islamic groups, most notably Hamas and Islamic Jihad, manipulated the failure of the Oslo Peace process to advance their internal political agenda to discredit the Palestinian Authority. Hamas and Islamic Jihad were still in principle pursuing the concept of 'complete liberation'. But the mainstream 'young guard' leaders – notably the subsequently imprisoned Marwan Barghouti – and the organizations they headed – Fatah's Tanzim or the al-Aqsa Brigades – repeatedly proclaimed no ambition beyond the 22 per cent Israel had offered. They wanted their independent state to co-exist with Israel, not to destroy it.¹⁰⁵

2.2.7.1 The use of suicide attacks during the second Intifada

The conflict reached new heights with the introduction of the 'martyrdom operations'. Palestinians were no longer content with symbolic expressions of protest through stone throwing as was the case during the 1987 Intifada, and more importantly, as was the case during the first few weeks of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. As discussed above, there had been suicide attacks before, but only with the second

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Intifada did they become the principal, systematic and strategic weapon in the Palestinian resistance, both by the Islamic as well as secular resistance groups.

The readiness of the many young men and women to sacrifice their lives in this manner was a reflection not merely of their own, individual despair, but of that of the whole society. With intensified Israeli policies of targeted assassinations, brutal reoccupation, mass incarceration and starvation, it was also perceived as the only way in which the Palestinians, so inferior, technically, organizationally and diplomatically, could even out the strategic and military balance at least some way in their favor.¹⁰⁶ In the first month alone, the ratio of fatalities was twenty Palestinians to one Israeli, a disproportionate number which was only reduced to ten to one by the end of the third month. Organizations such as Amnesty International, America's Human Rights Watch or Physicians for Human Right amply documented the extra-judicial 'executions' that had so quickly got under way, the brutality, the reckless and unnecessary shootings to kill or injure, the blatant disregard for standard methods of riot control.¹⁰⁷

There was undoubtedly strategic logic behind the use of suicide bombings, both in the years leading up to the second Intifada, and especially during the latter. The increased rate of suicide bombings shook Israel to its foundations. The immense damage they inflicted was also mainly psychological. But, in the end, they did not work. They were not only morally questionable, but also operationally counter-productive. Some Palestinians believed the targets should have been strictly confined to the soldiers and settlers who were both the symbols and the instruments of the occupation. The more disgust it generated in Israel and the rest of the world, the easier it became for Israel to make full and unconstrained use of its superior,

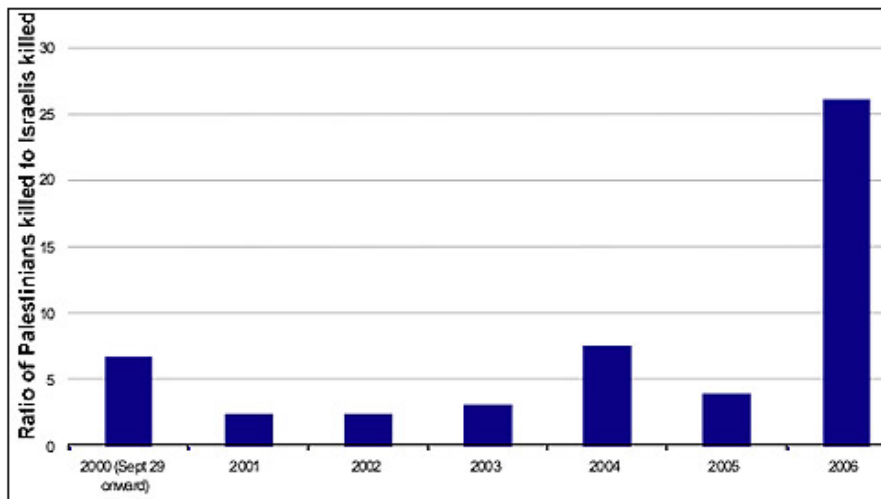
¹⁰⁶ Hisham Ahmed, 'Palestinian Resistance and 'Suicide Bombing': Causes and Consequences', Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *Root Causes of Terrorism*, Routledge, New York, 2005

¹⁰⁷ Hirst, p. 69

American-supplied arsenal of violence which it used to suppress the rebellion.¹⁰⁸
(See Figure 3 below).

FIGURE 3¹⁰⁹

RATIO OF PALESTINIANS KILLED TO ISRAELIS KILLED, 2000-2006



Ratio of Palestinians Killed to Israelis Killed During Current Palestinian Uprising (September 29, 2000 - November 3, 2006) Sources: B'Tselem, UN OCHA, and media reports. B'Tselem's and OCHA's descriptions of the circumstances surrounding these deaths show that approximately half the Palestinians killed during this period were clearly civilians.

It had actually been the Israelis themselves who first resorted to violence, and massively disproportionate violence at that, at the onset of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Immediately after Sharon's visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the army opened fire on crowds of non-violent demonstrators. Palestinian civilians, many of them children, died in far higher numbers than Israelis did. This was deliberate. When the Intifada erupted, Maariv commentator Ben Kaspit writes:

'...it was finally clear to all: Israel is not a state with an army, but an army with a state...For many years the Israeli Defence Forces had been waiting for this Intifada, and when it erupted, it unleashed all its frustrations on the Palestinians, who did not know what had hit them...' Tell me", General Amos Malka (head of Military Intelligence) said to Yosi Kopperwasser (a District Intelligence Officer), "how many bullets has the IDF fired since the

¹⁰⁸ Hirst, p. 30

¹⁰⁹ Source: <http://electronicIntifada.net/v2/article5951.shtml>

beginning of the Intifada?" Kopperwasser did not have a clue. Malka asked him to find out. When the answer arrived by noon, most of the officers who were present...turned white. In the first few days the IDF had fired about 700,000 bullets and other projectiles in the West Bank and about 300,000 in Gaza. Someone in the Central Command later quipped that the operation should be named "a bullet for every child".¹¹⁰

High Palestinian officials protested to their Israeli counterparts that they were breaking all the rules of the game. But the army continued shooting, relying mainly on snipers.¹¹¹ It led to more effective and lethal forms of Palestinian violence which eventually came to their climax in the suicide bombers. This led to the Israeli public to close ranks amid a growing clamor for punishment and revenge. The pervasive attitude of the Israeli public was that of disdain towards a subject people typical of colonial societies, and was quite receptive to the colonial slogan: 'the only language they understand is force'¹¹². For those on the left, who considered that they had done so much to promote the peace process, the Intifada was considered a kind of betrayal, even without the suicide bombers. The Arafat in whom they had placed their trust had grievously disappointed them. They believed Barak's claim that, when Arafat rejected his most 'generous offer', he had 'exposed Arafat's true face'. The 'peace camp' dwindled into almost non-existence. For the right, it was the fulfillment of all their prophecies: the Palestinians never wanted peace anyway, and Arafat remained the 'killer and murderer' bent on Israel's destruction they always said he was. Hirst explains, 'Before long both left and right were ready for the 'savior' who promised them a simple military solution. In the general elections of February 2001, and by an overwhelming margin, they chose Sharon to replace Barak at the head of the most extreme, bellicose government in Israel's history.'¹¹³ Sharon's mere

¹¹⁰ Maariv, 21 November 2002.

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Hisham Ahmed, 'Palestinian Resistance and 'Suicide Bombing': Causes and Consequences', Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *Root Causes of Terrorism*, Routledge, New York, 2005

¹¹³ Hirst, p. 28

appointment was a sign of more atrocious deeds to come. And in fact, it was only after he took office that Hamas turned to what one Israeli military analyst called 'the Palestinian H-bomb: exploding human beings'.¹¹⁴

For Sharon, the Intifada and the violence that came with it was the opportunity he had been waiting for. He had always been opposed to the peace process because he knew that the compromises would mean the 're-division' of 'Eretz Israel' – an area considered by the mainstream Israeli right to be equivalent to historic Palestine, which had become one since 1967. The ground had already been prepared as early as 1996, when the Israeli military drew up the contingency plan 'Field of Thorns', whose implementation would in effect bring about the destruction of Oslo and everything it stood for: the very notion of Palestinian self-determination, leading to eventual statehood, on any part of historic Palestine, and "any legitimate, representative, internationally recognized institution – such as Arafat and his Palestinian Authority –empowered to bring it about".¹¹⁵ All that was needed was the pretext, and the Intifada provided it. The proponents of this plan were so eager to take advantage of this pretext that they went into action even before Hamas or Islamic Jihad had executed their first serious act of terror.¹¹⁶ By the time this took place, the Palestinian casualty toll had reached 145 dead compared to 14 Israelis.¹¹⁷ Of course, when the suicide bombings came, they were horrible. However, according to Hirst, 'Palestinian atrocities came, after all, in the service of what the world regards as a legitimate purpose, the ending of occupation; Israeli ones in the service of an illegitimate one, its perpetuation.'¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Luft, Gal, 'The Palestinian H-Bomb', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August

¹¹⁵ Hirst, p. 29

¹¹⁶ a car bomb blast on November 2, 2000 which killed two persons in Jerusalem

¹¹⁷ Hirst, p.29

¹¹⁸ Hirst, p. 72

On 15 October 2000, at the request of Prime Minister Barak, the security services had already published a report which stated that 'Arafat is a severe threat to the security of the state and the damage which will result from his disappearance is less than the damage caused by his existence'.¹¹⁹ This was followed by a 60-page 'White Book' entitled *PA Non-Compliance: A Record of Bad Faith and Misconduct*, in which Arafat was accused of orchestrating the Intifada and giving the 'green light' to 'Islamist terror'. However, this claim completely contradicted what the Israeli security services had themselves long been saying about Arafat and his efforts to control Palestinian violence in the years before the Intifada, which was abundantly cited in the Israeli media. He 'is doing his job – he is fighting terror – and puts all his weight against Hamas,' Ami Ayalon, head of the Shabak secret service, told the government in 1998.¹²⁰ He was even ordering the assassinations of Hamas terrorists which were disguised as 'accidents'. Arafat was doing a better 'job' than the Israelis ever did themselves.¹²¹

In *Evil Unleashed*, one of Israel's forthright commentators, Tanya Reinhart, investigated the hidden origins, motives and methodology of the brutal Israeli response to the Al-Aqsa uprising.¹²² Reinhart writes:

In mainstream political discourse, Israel's recent atrocities are described as 'retaliatory acts' - answering the last wave of terror attacks on Israeli civilians. But in fact, this 'retaliation' had been carefully prepared long before. Already in October 2000, at the outset of the Palestinian uprising, military circles were ready with detailed operative plans to topple Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. This was before the Palestinian terror attacks started...The operative plan, known as 'Fields of Thorns' had been prepared back in 1996, and was then updated during the Intifada. (Amir Oren, Ha'aretz, Nov. 23, 2001). The plan includes everything that Israel has been executing lately, and more...But what is the rationale behind Israel's systematic drive to eliminate the

¹¹⁹ Details of the document were published in Ma'ariv, July 6, 2001

¹²⁰ Haaretz, 6.4.98, p. A4

¹²¹ Tanya Reinhart, 'Evil Unleashed', *Media Monitors Network*, 17 December 2001

¹²² Reinhart, op. cit.

Palestinian Authority and undo the Oslo arrangements? It certainly cannot be based on 'disappointment' with Arafat's performance, as is commonly claimed. The fact of the matter is that from the perspective of Israel's interests in maintaining the occupation, Arafat did fulfill Israel's expectations all these last years... Arafat did manage, through harsh means of oppression, to contain the frustration of his people, and guarantee the safety of the settlers, as Israel continued undisturbed to build new settlements and appropriate more Palestinian land. The oppressive machinery, - the various security forces of Arafat, were formed and trained in collaboration with Israel. Much energy and resources were put into building this complex Oslo apparatus. Why, then, was the military and political echelon so determined to destroy all this already in October 2000, even before the terror waves started?...The Palestinian society resorted once more to their marvelous strategy of 'zumud' - sticking to the land and sustaining the pressure. Right from the start, the Hamas political leadership, and others, were warning that Israel is trying to push the Palestinians into a civil war, in which the nation slaughters itself. All fragments of the society cooperated to prevent this danger, and calm conflicts as soon as they were deteriorating to arms. They also managed, despite the tyranny of Arafat's rule, to build an impressive amount of institutions and infrastructure... In 1999, the army got back to power, through the 'political generals' - first Barak, and then Sharon. (They collaborated in the last elections to guarantee that no other, civil, candidate will be allowed to run.) The road opened to correct what they view as the grave mistake of Oslo. In order to get there, it was first necessary to convince the spoiled Israeli society that the Palestinians are not willing to live in peace and are threatening our mere existence. Sharon alone could not have possibly achieved that, but Barak did succeed, with his 'generous offer' fraud. After a year of horrible terror attacks, combined with massive propaganda and lies, Sharon and the army feel that nothing can stop them from turning to full execution. Why is it so urgent for them to topple Arafat? Shabtai Shavit, former head of the Security Service ('Mossad'), explains this openly: "...There is nobody in the Palestinian gallery that can enter his shoes in this context of international status. If they [the Palestinians] will lose this gain...the Palestinian issue will get off the international agenda." (interview in Yediot, December 7, 2001). Their immediate goal is to get the Palestinians off the international agenda, so slaughter, starvation, forced evacuation and 'migration' can continue undisturbed, leading, possibly, to the final realization of Sharon's long standing vision, embodied in the military plans.¹²³

Sharon went about his plan with a merciless brutality. He had not earned the nickname 'the bulldozer' for nothing. It was all done in the name of 'self-defense'

¹²³ Tanya Reinhart, 'Evil Unleashed', *Media Monitors Network*, 17 December 2001

and 'retaliation' against the terror which the Palestinians had allegedly initiated. In reality, however, it became clear that, once he had gotten the war he wanted, Sharon himself was doing all he could to perpetuate it. Although Sharon did publicly say that he wanted a ceasefire and the resumption of the peace process, his actions belied his words. Every time there was a period of calm, every time the Palestinians observed the latest ceasefire, every time Arafat did get Hamas to stop its suicide bombings, Sharon violated the ceasefire himself, most typically with the so-called 'targeted killings' of Palestinian activists, which he knew would provoke the kind of Palestinian retaliation he wanted. He did this repeatedly. It became so obvious a pattern that the image he and his government sought to give to their public and the watching world was no longer as victim but the reverse: Israel became the aggressor, the Palestinians were the ones 'retaliating' in 'self-defense'. Hirst writes that

Sharon did not want the ceasefire because he did not want the peace process, because the 'peace plan' he had in mind would then be exposed as the total antithesis of both 'peace' and 'process' that it really was. Insofar as he ever spelt it out at all, it would have repudiated all the progress made, via the 1991 Madrid conference, Oslo, and subsequent accords and negotiations, since the peace-making began. It would have consecrated all existing Zionist 'facts on the ground' under yet another 'interim' agreement of indefinite duration during which Israel would be free to create ever more new ones. He hardly even bothered to pretend that he believed in it himself. The 'idea of making peace with the Palestinians is absurd,' he had said at the outset of the Intifada.¹²⁴

The only thing Sharon wanted was to complete the real agenda which lay behind his military campaign – the destruction of Oslo. In the pretext of his war against a poorly supplied Palestinian resistance, he unleashed high-tech, state terror of his own. It was the Palestinians' guerrilla attacks on soldiers and settlers, or

¹²⁴ Hirst, p.32 and Kapeliouk, Amon, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 2001.

civilians inside Israel proper, drive-by shootings, road-side bombs and home-made mortar volleys against Israel's vast military might, its collective punishments, house demolitions, curfews, house-to-house searches, mass arrests, public stripping of civilians to their underwear or marking their arms with a number, re-occupation of major towns, brutal pacifications of refugee camps, razing of olive groves. It was suicide bombers versus tanks, helicopter gunships and F-16 fighter planes used on densely populated areas.

Sharon held Arafat and the Palestinian Authority directly responsible for every single attack, and constantly demanded that they end them. They were not responsible, of course, and Sharon's own actions ensured that they were not, and could not be. He subjected Arafat to long sieges in his headquarters in Ramallah. In the last of them the Israeli army dynamited and bulldozed the entire compound except for Arafat's office. He destroyed the security services and the police, without which Arafat was powerless to enforce his will. The terror went on, as Sharon knew it would, because it simply wasn't under Arafat's control. In fact, in the eyes of the Palestinians, Arafat was a hero one day as he withstood Sharon's sieges, and a traitor the next, as he enforced his collaborationist role (in vain). Yet even as he declared Arafat as 'irrelevant', Sharon still cast him as the mastermind behind the terror. It was logically ludicrous. Sharon's actions and the actions the Israeli soldiers performed betrayed the real purpose. They rampaged through the Palestinian ministries of health, education, and agriculture, destroying computers, files, official records, smashing furniture, ransacking businesses and banks, looting public buildings and private residences. And just as they had done on an even greater scale during Sharon's invasion of Lebanon twenty years before, they systematically defecated and urinated in any place but the lavatories, on floors, carpets or

children's paintings, in bottles, drawers or flowerpots, and even in an office photocopier.¹²⁵ The West Bank was carved up into countless disconnected enclaves, making all traffic and communication between them impracticable, dangerous or extremely difficult. Routine journeys to work or home, which might have taken just five minutes, now took five hours. They brought devastation to the Palestinian economy; unemployment rose to 60 per cent; 70 per cent of the population fell below the poverty line; nearly one third of Palestinian children suffered from malnutrition.¹²⁶ Education, for the most educated community in the Middle East, was severely disrupted. In short, Israel made life so generally impossible for the Palestinians that, unless they had a very good reason to stay or nowhere else to go, any normal person would have left.¹²⁷

Over the course of the years, many Israeli politicians, from Moshe Dayan¹²⁸ to Sharon, had confided that 'making life impossible' – by 'bureaucratic, economic and social harassment of one kind or another' became a secret practice by which they wanted to achieve it.¹²⁹ It had not worked. Their 'demographic problem' is what the Israelis euphemistically call it. What should be done about the non-Jews in their midst? The 'problem' had been there since the Zionist enterprise began; it only found a temporary 'solution' in the expulsions of 1948. And ever since 1967, and the capture of the remaining 22 per cent of historic Palestine, Israel had steadily reasserted itself. From the left to right of the political spectrum, Israelis agreed that, if the Palestinians of the occupied territories were to be added to Israel's own Palestinian citizens, it would be a demographic 'time-bomb' that ultimately would

¹²⁵ Amira Hass, *Haaretz*, 6 May 2002; see also Kathleen Christison, 'Israel, A Light Unto Nations?', *Counterpunch*, 11 May 2002

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Hirst, p. 33

¹²⁸ Israeli Minister of Defence for the Six Day War (1967) and Foreign Minister (1977-79).

¹²⁹ Hirst, p. 33.

threaten very identity of the Jewish state. If Israel wanted to safeguard its essential nature, its *raison d'être*, it would have to become an overtly discriminatory, in fact racist state, putting its Jewish character above its 'democratic' one.¹³⁰

For the Israeli left, the solution lay in the 'separation' of the two peoples. Ideally, this would be accomplished through a final settlement under which Israel would withdraw from most or all of the territories. But for the majority of the right, whose whole *Greater-Israel* ideology rejected withdrawal and the dismantling of settlements, the only feasible solution lay in 'transfer'. This was just another euphemism which really meant expulsion and ethnic cleansing. Far right parties such as Moledet, with several seats in the Knesset, had openly inscribed it on their official programs.¹³¹ The Likud had not gone that far, but its public discourse was full of it. As many as a third of Labor supporters were said to approve it. In 2002, a poll showed that 46 per cent of the population would like to see the 'transfer' of the Palestinians living in the occupied territories, and 31 per cent (or even 60 per cent when the question was posed in a different way) supported the transfer of the Palestinians from Israel proper.¹³²

The disturbing thing was that, since the Intifada, not only had the popularity of 'transfer' grown among its traditional advocates, it had increasingly entered into mainstream political discourse. But the mainstream did not consider Israel's responsibility for the Nakba to be a matter of regret, a wrong to be righted. On the contrary, Ilan Pappé, one of the 'new historians', claims that "although a very considerable number of Israeli politicians, journalists and academics have ceased to deny what happened in 1948, they have nonetheless also been willing to justify it

¹³⁰ Hirst, p.34.

¹³¹ Masalha., pp.105-195

¹³² *Haaretz*, 12 March 2002

publicly, not only in retrospect, but as a prescription for the future.”¹³³ To many located at the centre of the political spectrum, the Nakba now seemed to be an inevitable and justifiable consequence of the Zionist project in historical Palestine. If there was any grievance it was that the expulsion was not complete. Transfer became the official option, even recommended by one of Israel's most prestigious academic centers, the Center for Inter-Disciplinary Studies in Herzliya.¹³⁴

Two years into the second Intifada, Sharon felt able to pronounce Oslo dead. But he had still not achieved the complete subjugation of the Palestinians. He also had not established that puppet leadership he wanted, which would pacify and police the territories on Israel's behalf.

Having provided an analysis of the context in which the suicide bombings took place, in Chapter 3 I will examine the Palestinian suicide bombings from an organizational perspective, including a more in-depth analysis of the organizational motivations briefly touched upon in the first two chapters, the group process, the individual motivations used to the advantage of the organizations, and public support.

¹³³ Ilan Pappé, Demons of the Nakba, Al-Ahram Weekly Online, 16 - 22 May 2002, Issue No.586

¹³⁴ Al-Ahram Weekly, 16-22 May 2002.

3 Suicide Bombings as Strategic Organizational Tool

Some scholars studying suicide terrorism claim that suicide terrorism would not exist if it weren't for the organizations that chose to employ this particular tactic¹³⁵. They argue that it is the organization, not the individual, that is the important piece to study in order to understand why this method is employed and how to combat it. According to Joseph Lelyveld, executive editor of the New York Times, "it's an organizational phenomenon. What we needed to understand was not why bombers did it but how they were recruited and trained. The bombers themselves were weapons. In times of turmoil, they were available to skilful and compelling recruiters who...knew how to weave interpretations of history, religion and present injustice, personal or national, into a tactical imperative."¹³⁶

Although individual and environmental factors do play a role in the decision to conduct a suicide operation, it is the organizational level that is key to understanding the phenomenon, particularly in the Palestinian case study. This analysis therefore focuses on explaining the Palestinian suicide bombings from an organizational and strategic point of view. As several other authors have noted, suicide bombings are an extremely cost effective tactic in asymmetric warfare from an organizational standpoint¹³⁷. It is relatively cheap; there is no need for complex and risky escape routes or safe houses. And if the suicide bombers carry out the attack successfully, they cannot disclose information. As Bruce Hoffmann explains, "Suicide bombings are inexpensive and effective. They are less complicated and compromising than other kinds of terrorist operations. The suicide terrorist is the ultimate smart bomb.

¹³⁵ Manekas, Jillian, "The Invisible Enemy: Suicide Terrorism in Chechnya and Sri Lanka." MA Thesis submitted to Tufts University, 2005

¹³⁶ Joseph Lelyveld, "All Suicide Bombers Are Not Alike," *New York Time*, October 28, 2001

¹³⁷ Berman & Laitin; Kruglanski, 2003; Moghadam, 2003; Pape, 2003.

Perhaps most important, coldly efficient bombings tear at the fabric of trust that holds societies together.”¹³⁸

The importance of the organization to the use of suicide terrorism should not be underestimated. Without the organization, suicide terrorism would be far less prevalent, as suicide bombings hardly ever take place on an individual basis without the backing and support of an organization. Organizations are the important link between societal conflicts and individual suicide bombers. Without organizations, the aggrieved individuals cannot act out their violence in a sustained manner.¹³⁹ Suicide operations require organizational tasks that include acquiring intelligence on the potential targets, recruiting and preparing the potential suicide bombers, engineering explosives for the suicide attacks, and issuing propaganda to promote the organization’s ideology, gain public support, and set the stage for future recruitment of followers.¹⁴⁰ Organizations that adopt suicide bombings as their tactic of resistance require a sophisticated infrastructure, financial and material resources, and commitment at various levels of the organization’s membership and leadership. Without this organizational infrastructure and commitment, suicide attacks would be limited in scope and magnitude.

However, the organizational aspect of suicide bombings is at the same time a major point of vulnerability for the organizations, since it opens up the possibility of launching effective counter-terrorism efforts.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, the fact that suicide bombings are an organizational tool also means that the suicide bombing

¹³⁸ “The Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” Bruce Hoffman, *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2003.

¹³⁹ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ See Kruglanski and Golec. And Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) at p.34: “Faced with mounting attacks, Israeli policymakers responded with hard-line counter-terror tactics of massive retaliation, targeted assassinations of militant leaders, and building demolitions to deter future bombings.”

attacks can be stopped – at least at the organizational level. Thus, the organizational aspect of suicide terrorism offers some hope that this phenomenon is, after all, open to rational solutions – such as negotiations.¹⁴²

3.1 Why organizations use suicide terrorism

At this point it is important to explore why an organization would choose to employ suicide terrorism as a tactic. The reasons for most organizations, especially those involved in an asymmetric power struggle, are strategic in nature. The advantages of the use of this tactic include:

- (1) it results in many casualties and causes extensive damage,
- (2) it attracts wide media coverage and displays great determination and an inclination of self-sacrifice,
- (3) it guarantees that the attack is carried out at the most appropriate time and place with regard to circumstances at the target location,
- (4) as soon as the suicide terrorist has left for the mission, success is virtually guaranteed,
- (5) planning and executing the escape route is one of the most complicated and problematic issues, suicide terrorists don't need one, since the attacker is killed during the action, and
- (6) there is no fear of capture and interrogation of the terrorist.¹⁴³

Suicide bombings bring a wide range of advantages for the organization employing them. First of all, the organization predetermines the target but the suicide bomber himself decides on the precise location and timing of execution. By leaving room for flexibility, the mission has a greater chance of success. Second, the unique features of suicide bombings promote the likelihood of causing greater harm in comparison to other types of terrorism. Third, by upgrading their violence through the

¹⁴² See Kruglanski and Golec..

¹⁴³ Boaz Ganor, "Suicide Attacks in Israel," *Countering Suicide Terrorism, An International Conference February 20-23*, (Herzliya, Israel: The International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center, 2001), 139.

use of suicide bombings, the organizations are suggesting that there are practically no means of deterring them with traditional methods.¹⁴⁴ One of the main aims in using this tactic is to spread fear among the population, prompting the public to appeal to their governments to solve the problem by at the very least negotiating the demands. Mia Bloom writes: "Although a suicide attack aims to physically destroy an initial target, its primary use is typically as a weapon of psychological warfare intended to affect a larger public audience. The primary target is not those actually killed or injured in the attack, but those made to witness it."¹⁴⁵ And according to Robert Pape, at its core, "suicide terrorism is a strategy of coercion, a means to compel a target government to change policy. The central logic of this strategy is simple: Suicide terrorism attempts to inflict enough pain on the opposing society to overwhelm their interest in resisting the terrorists' demands and, so, to cause either the government to concede or the population to revolt against the government."¹⁴⁶ External pressure on governments may also be beneficial to an organization's cause. The fact that such tactics attract wide media coverage and highlight the group's cause is a major benefit. Considering the advantages listed above, it becomes evident why organizations with limited resources or those who are fighting against a more powerful enemy would find this cost-efficient tactic highly attractive. In this sense, the use of suicide bombings as a strategy can be compared to the strategic use of force by nation states when in dispute with other states. According to Pape, "the heart of the strategy of suicide terrorism is the same as the coercive logic used by states when they employ air power or economic sanctions to punish an adversary: to cause mounting civilian costs to overwhelm the target state's interest in

¹⁴⁴ Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" 346-7.

¹⁴⁵ Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

¹⁴⁶ Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 4.

the issue in dispute and so to cause it to concede to the terrorists' political demands."¹⁴⁷

In many cases, and in particular in the Palestinian case study, "martyrdom operations" are also considered to be the only answer to opposing an enemy with vastly superior military capabilities.¹⁴⁸ Groups opposing larger states with more military might are inclined to use a tactic that, although not as technologically advanced, has similar power capabilities. Mia Bloom explains that "most suicide terrorism...is perpetrated by insurgent opposition groups struggling against an established and much more powerful state. It is used after strategies have been tried and found wanting but is rarely the last ditch attempt in the face of certain defeat."¹⁴⁹

Organizational theorists state four main motivations for organizations to employ suicide terrorism as one of their tactics: a) retaliatory actions against its adversaries; b) ideological aims of destroying the middle ground of compromise; c) competition for support within its prospective support groups; and d) organizational capabilities of the groups to continue with the bombing campaign."¹⁵⁰

Retaliatory actions against the enemy through the use of suicide terrorism are seen as effective in that they are considered to inflict the pain and death that the group itself or the community it represents has experienced. Concerning the second motivation, if the group has a radical ideology with regard to the conflict and its resolution, the use of suicide terrorism will most likely ensure that the enemy will either categorically reject the aims of the group or concede to the aims of the group in order to stop the bombings. It is unlikely that a state will take the middle ground in

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 89.

¹⁵⁰ Mundra, Kusum and Gupta, Dipak K. *Suicide Bombing As A Strategic Instrument of Protest: An Empirical Investigation of Hamas and and Palestinian Islamic Jihad*, at 14. (accessed on November 10, 2005). Available from www.economics.ucr.edu/seminars/fall03/10-01-03%20Kusum%20Mundra%20Intro.pdf.

the conflict when faced with suicide terrorism.¹⁵¹ This type of tactic has a polarizing effect. Thirdly, organizations will use suicide terrorism to raise their group's status in relation to other groups. This was particularly evident in the Palestinian case. The use of suicide terrorism places these organizations at the top, often enabling them to draw supporters from other groups to their cause as this tactic is considered to be among the most extreme and is a sign of absolute commitment to the cause. Lastly, the use of suicide terrorism shows that the group has the organizational structure and capabilities to employ this tactic and will continue to do so.

Suicide terrorism does not depend on the number of 'troops' available, but on the ability to recruit individual bombers willing to sacrifice their lives for the organization's cause. The costs of sending suicide bombers are minimal, compared to the costs of conventional weapons and the complex logistics involved in acquiring them. Based on their understanding of various psychological principles, some militant organizations have been able to create a large pool of suicide bombers.¹⁵² The organizations also decide when and where to deploy the suicide bombers in order to best achieve the organizations' political objectives. For instance, Hamas refrained from carrying out suicide attacks early on in the Oslo peace process for the express reason that they felt that the Palestinian public would not support it¹⁵³. In other words, the Palestinian organizations could turn suicide bombings on and off depending on their assessment of the political, social and economic context¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵¹ Manekas, Jillian, "The Invisible Enemy: Suicide Terrorism in Chechnya and Sri Lanka." MA Thesis submitted to Tufts University, 2005

¹⁵² Kruglanski, Arie and Golec, Agnieszka, "Individual Motivations, The Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism," in E.M. Meyerson Milgrom (Ed.) *Suicide Missions and the Market for Martyrs, A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press

¹⁵³ Merari, July 13, 2000.

¹⁵⁴ See Berman & Laitin; Krueger & Laitin.

3.2 The Organizational Motivations of the Palestinian Groups

Under what circumstances did the Palestinian groups decide to resort to suicide attacks? Asking their members to sacrifice themselves is an extreme step, so it would be logical to assume that only under extreme circumstances would a group be willing to resort to this method. Extreme circumstances are situations in which, according to the group, its main cause or its organizational existence are in grave danger.¹⁵⁵ Based on the material collected from the various Palestinian groups' websites, the International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism's terror-attack database, the archives of the newspaper *Ha'aretz*, the Palestinian Information Center, and the IDF Website, three main types of motives emerged as reasons for conducting the suicide attacks:¹⁵⁶

1. Desire for **organizational** revenge or retaliation – due, for example, to an Israeli attack on the organization's leaders, members, sites or offices.
2. Desire for **national** revenge or retaliation – due, for example, to an Israeli attack against Palestinians who are not members of the organization claiming responsibility for the attack.
3. Desire to achieve a tactical (i.e., specific, short-term) **political** goal, such as disrupting security cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian authorities, or achieving a strategic (i.e., general, long-term) political goal, such as forcing Israel to withdraw from occupied territories.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ariel Merari, 'Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism' in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, 2005

¹⁵⁶ For the basis of this analysis, the motivations for the Palestinian suicide bombings are derived from the reasons the suicide bombers gave themselves in statements they made prior to conducting the operation as well as from published statements of organizational representatives, family members and friends.

¹⁵⁷ Adapted from Robert J. Brym, Bader Araj, *Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction*, 2006, accessed from http://z3950.muse.jhu.edu.library3.webster.edu/journals/social_forces/v084/84.4brym_tab02.html; A fourth motivation was individual in nature and thus not included in this analysis of the *organizational* motives: the **individual's** desire for personal revenge or retaliation due to an Israeli action against the suicide bomber or his or her relatives or friends, or desire to regain one's reputation due to the suicide bomber (or a family member) having engaged in shameful behaviour, such as collaboration with the enemy.

TABLE 2¹⁵⁸

Motivations for Suicide Bombings

Reactive Motivations	
Personal revenge or retaliation	23
National revenge or retaliation	46
Religious revenge or retaliation	2
Proactive Motivations	
To regain reputation	5
Religious	25
Total	101
N	57

During peak periods of suicide bombings in the second Intifada coordinated activities of several organizations could be observed (Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Fatah, etc.) and were in that sense "national" campaigns. Brym and Araj (2006), divided events that elicited suicide attacks into two broad categories: reactive and proactive (see Table 3 below). Reactive precipitants include Israeli actions that elicited a Palestinian reaction in the form of a suicide attack. Such actions include the assassination of organizational leaders and members, the killing of Palestinian civilians, and other actions such as the demolition of houses owned by the families of people involved in anti-Israel activities. Proactive precipitants include political, religious or ideological events that elicited a suicide attack without provocation by specific Israeli actions. In such cases, the organizations used symbolically significant anniversaries, elections or negotiations as opportunities to further their goals by means of suicide attacks.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.¹⁵⁹ Robert J. Brym, Bader Araj, *Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction*, 2006.

TABLE 3¹⁶⁰

Precipitants of Suicide Bombings

Reactive Precipitants	
Assassination of organizational leaders	34
Killing of Palestinians other than organizational leaders	30
Other Israeli actions not involving killing	18
Proactive Precipitants	
Significant political events	13
Significant religious or ideological events	5
Total	100
N	106

According to the data Brym and Araj collected, the majority of suicide attacks were precipitated by specific Israeli actions. In that sense their timing was not of the Palestinians' choosing. In fact, Israel's response made it more difficult for suicide attacks to be conducted. Especially after the peak in suicide missions of March 2002, Israel's actions (including the construction of the security wall cordoning off much of the West Bank from Israel) significantly decreased the number of suicide bombings (successful, not attempted) and increased the time between precipitant and reactive attacks.¹⁶¹ This will be discussed in more depth below. Nevertheless, even during the Intifada's less violent second half, suicide bombings were often brought about by Israeli actions. For example, the suicide bombing in Beersheba on August 31, 2004 was declared to be in response to the targeted killings of Hamas leaders Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi. Yet those assassinations had occurred four and five months earlier. In contrast, in the first half of the Intifada, the response time for reprisal attacks was typically no longer than three weeks, often

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.¹⁶¹ Ibid.

less.¹⁶² This analysis of precipitants leads to two conclusions: 1. Most suicide bombings were advertised as revenge or retaliatory attacks by the groups, and 2. Suicide bombings were able to be deterred through Israel's harsh counterterrorism tactics, such as targeted killings and the building of the Wall.

Organizations tend to operate in a calculated, strategic way. To place this hypothesis into the Palestinian context, Brym and Araj examined the organizational rationales for suicide attacks. Thirteen percent of the 165 rationales that they identified mentioned long-term strategic goals such as ending the Israeli occupation. A further 21 percent mentioned short-term tactical goals such as disrupting security cooperation between Israel and the PA. Seven percent mentioned that suicide bombings were calculated to achieve religious goals – in particular, the defense or spread of Islam. However, this leaves a majority of rationales – 59 percent – that fall into the reactive category. Even at the organizational level, where, according to Pape (2003), calculated, strategic considerations govern action, they found that six out of 10 organizational rationales focused on avenging Israeli attacks on the organizations and the Palestinian people or retaliating for such attacks in order to maintain organizational morale.¹⁶³ Of course the organizations responsible for suicide attacks follow a higher level of strategic logic than the suicide bombers themselves. But it is nonetheless misleading to make the claim across-the-board that predominantly strategic considerations regarding the re-conquest of territory underlie suicide bombings. In the Palestinian context, whether the timing or the objectives of suicide attacks is examined, the reality is more complex.

Pape's claim that suicide bombings are relatively successful in terms of achieving strategic goals can be questioned – particularly in the Palestinian case

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Robert J. Brym, Bader Araj, *Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction*, 2006, accessed from http://z3950.muse.jhu.edu.library3.webster.edu/journals/social_forces/v084/84.4brym_tab02.html

study. Pape defines success as the withdrawal of occupying forces.¹⁶⁴ There was just one such withdrawal during the second Intifada – Israel's pullout from Gaza in 2005. But it is unlikely that the pullout can be viewed as a consequence of Palestinian suicide attacks. This may be the view of Hamas and some of the other organizations. Hamas' official statement following the Gaza pullout included the phrase, "Four years of resistance surpassed 10 years of bargaining."¹⁶⁵ And in early September 2005, the "general leader" of Hamas' military wing, Muhammad Deif, said to his comrades that "without... your love of martyrdom, the liberation of Gaza could not have been achieved." ¹⁶⁶

However, the geographical location of suicide bombings and the geographical origin of the bombers themselves do not support this conclusion. During the second Intifada, Gaza was neither the target of a large number of suicide attacks nor were a large number of suicide bombers recruited from there. Only 18 percent of all suicide attacks took place in Gaza, the same as in the West Bank. Nearly two-thirds of suicide attacks took place in Israel proper (see Table 4). Only 26 percent of suicide bombers came from Gaza, the majority came from the West Bank (72 percent).¹⁶⁷ Thus, turning back to Pape's claim that suicide attacks are a decisive factor in leading to territorial concessions, if this were the case here, then the concessions should have been made in the West Bank, not Gaza.

¹⁶⁴ Pape, Robert A. 2005. *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*. Random House.

¹⁶⁵ Robert J. Brym, Bader Araj, *Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction*, 2006, accessed from http://z3950.muse.jhu.edu.library3.webster.edu/journals/social_forces/v084/84.4brym_tab02.html

¹⁶⁶ Taken from the Palestinian Information Center, quoted in Robert J. Brym, Bader Araj, 2006

¹⁶⁷ For population data, see Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2005a.

TABLE 4¹⁶⁸

Geographical Location of Suicide Attacks and Geographical Origin of Suicide Bombers

Region	Percent of bombers	Bombers per million Palestinians	Percent of bombings
West Bank	72	30	18
Gaza	26	18	18
Israel proper	1		64
Other	1		0
Total	100		100
N	86		137

Nevertheless, suicide bombings did have an effect on Israeli actions. But the effect was often the opposite of what was intended by the organizations. Palestinian moderates wanted Israeli public opinion to soften and Israel to withdraw from the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Extremists wanted to create deep rifts in Israeli society and to dissolve Israel as a Jewish state. But suicide bombings cannot be seen as a rational toll to achieve any of these objectives.¹⁶⁹ Polls conducted among Israelis demonstrated that the suicide attacks helped hardliner Ariel Sharon win the elections in 2001 and, in general, radicalized Israeli public opinion throughout the second Intifada.¹⁷⁰ The suicide bombing attacks also caused Israel to reoccupy Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank and Gaza in 2002. Israel had withdrawn from these areas in 1995-97 following negotiations agreed upon in the 1993 Oslo Accords. But in March 2002, 135 Israeli civilians were killed in suicide attacks, the most lethal of which was the so-called Passover massacre at the Park Hotel in Netanya, in which 30 Israelis lost their lives. Just one day after the Passover massacre, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield. Twenty thousand reservists

¹⁶⁸ Source: http://z3950.muse.jhu.edu.library3.webster.edu/journals/social_forces/v084/84.4brym_tab05.html

¹⁶⁹ cf. Elster 2005; Weber 1947: 115-18.

¹⁷⁰ Arian 2001, 2002; Eldar 2005; Elran 2006.

were called up in a large-scale mobilization that was not seen since the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. It was the biggest military operation in the West Bank and Gaza since the 1967 war, and the two territories were almost completely reoccupied within weeks. If the strategic aim of the suicide bombings in March was to force Israel to withdraw completely from the occupied territories, they achieved just the opposite. Furthermore, substantial West Bank territory was incorporated on the Israeli side of the security wall that Israel built to make it more difficult to launch suicide attacks. Therefore, on a larger scale and in the long run, the suicide bombings also made it more difficult for the Palestinians to gain any territorial concessions from Israel. On the contrary, Israel appropriated more Palestinian land as a result.

Therefore, in the Palestinian context, one can conclude that the use of suicide bombings was a problematic strategy that rarely achieved strategic territorial concessions from Israel and was often counterproductive, leading to unintended, negative consequences. In sum, the suicide bombings were little effective in achieving strategic objectives and political concessions.

3.2.1 A Closer Look at the Palestinian Suicide Bombings

The asymmetrical balance of power between Israelis and Palestinians and the ineptness and inability of the Palestinian political body to deliver the promised peace of the Oslo Accords deepened the frustration and despair among the people on the one hand, and created the desire to consider alternatives other than

negotiations on the other. The gigantic prison, to borrow Ilan Pappé's term,¹⁷¹ the occupation regime established in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip only helped define the nature and dynamics of these alternatives. As Israel enjoys a superpower status in the region, Palestinians are left with bitter and very limited options: either to give in to Israel's military superiority or to resist. Regular warfare is unthinkable. The Israeli army possesses the means and the know-how to inflict (as it does) irreparable damage on the Palestinians. A head-on collision with one of the world's best equipped armies is certainly irrational, if not suicidal. Symbolic resistance through stone throwing did not seem to be a viable, satisfactory option. For the twenty-year-old electrical engineering student at Birzeit University, Diya Taweel, resistance was not throwing stones at a powerful military machine, as his sister recalls from discussions with him. For him, it had to be much more:

"Once I asked him if he threw rocks. He said he didn't because there was no point. He said if you go to throw a rock you are committing suicide because a rock doesn't do anything. If you want to face their guns, you have to have something better than a rock."

(Neda Taweel (Baker 2001))

What was the alternative to a rock? The search for an easy-to-make, cheap, effective, almost risk-free, precise and easy to use weapon was dictated by the need to reciprocate the brutality of the use of fighter jets, helicopters and tanks on densely populated areas. Although coined 'collateral damage', the Israeli killing and injuring of thousands of Palestinian civilians on an ongoing basis shattered the moral deterrent of resorting to suicide bombing attacks against Israeli civilians. This feeling was compounded by the fact that "the Palestinians had suffered so many civilian casualties since the Intifada began that Palestinians found joy in any suffering

¹⁷¹ Lecture on 'The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians' held by Ilan Pappé in Vienna, Austria on 6 December 2008.

inflicted on their enemy. There was a feeling that 'they should suffer too...'”¹⁷²

Suzanne Goldenberg of *The Guardian* makes the same point in her observations about suicide bombings:

“This is a conflict that has been fought without rules. On one side stands an army of volunteers, ready to kill and be killed, intent on inflicting the maximum [...] casualties. They can strike anywhere, at any time... On the other side stands a regional superpower which unleashed F-16s and Apache helicopters, gunboats and tanks against Palestinian refugee camps and towns, and assassinated leading activist.”

(Goldenberg 2002b)

Hafez (2006) explains the reasoning of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and other groups that adopted suicide bombings in their struggle against Israel to be as follows:

1. Negotiations failed to deliver on the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people.
2. Armed resistance is the best means to raise the costs of the Israeli occupation and ultimately push them out of Palestinian lands.
3. Given Israel's superior military capabilities and forces, conventional attacks inside Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 are likely to fail.
4. Suicide bombings inside the Green Line (1949 armistice borders) are more effective in fighting the Israelis because they terrorize their populations, destroy their economy, drive away immigrants and tourists, and force the Israelis to choose between life without the occupation or death with the occupation.
5. Israel is an armed, militarized society with a “citizen army.” Therefore, it is legitimate to attack its people anywhere in historic Palestine, even if they do not don military garb.
6. Attacking Israeli civilians is the price Israel pays for attacking Palestinian militants and civilians.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Ariel Merari ‘Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism’ in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, Proceedings of an Expert Meeting on the Root Causes of Terrorism (9-11 June 2003), Oslo: The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2003

¹⁷³ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace

3.2.1.1 Military Considerations

Other than the tactical organizational considerations for the use of suicide bombing attacks described above, there are two other reasons why this method became the most prevalent tactic among the Palestinian organizations. First, suicide attacks are considered to be very effective in terms of increasing the number of fatalities per attack (as opposed to conventional weapons). While the average number of fatalities in shooting attacks is 2.11, the average number of fatalities in a suicide attack is 8.11.¹⁷⁴ Second, in most cases where suicide bombers are dispatched, the dispatching organization does not lose more than one member, unless the operation is executed in several places at the same time. This prevents a more rapid depletion of suicide potentials in the organization.

The Palestinian factions lost many lives through the previous use of conventional hit-and-run operations without inflicting very much harm on the IDF. Thus, they not only switched tactics but also switched from military targets to “softer” – i.e. civilian – targets, which could terrorize the Israeli population at large, weaken the Israeli economy, and drive settlers away from the occupied territories. In justifying the strategy of suicide bombings to internal critics, Hamas’ and Islamic Jihad’s principle motivations were not religious but instrumental in nature. In other words, suicide bombings were promoted because they were viewed as more effective than conventional methods of resistance and the best means to achieve the strategic aims of the Palestinian people.¹⁷⁵ According to Azet al-Rushuq, a member of Hamas’ Political Bureau abroad, “This weapon [suicide bomber] is our winning card, which turned our weakness and feebleness into strength, and created parity

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

never before witnessed in the history of struggle with the Zionist enemy. It also gave our people the ability to respond, deter, and inflict harm on the enemy; it no longer bears the brunt of punishment alone.”¹⁷⁶

This concept of a “balance of terror” was also confirmed by Muhammad Nazzal, a member of Hamas’ Political Bureau abroad, in an interview on *al-Jazeera* television¹⁷⁷. Nazzal argued that military operations within the occupied territories resulted on average in one Israeli death for every 12 Palestinians killed. In contrast, operations within Israel’s 1948 borders resulted in nine Israeli deaths for every Palestinian suicide bomber.¹⁷⁸ He concludes that suicide bombings equalized the Palestinians strategic power since they do not have fighter planes, Apache helicopters, tanks, and so on. The suicide operations created a balance of forces. Although the accuracy of Nazzal’s overall assessment of the equalizing power of suicide bombings may be contested, his claim that suicide bombings have narrowed the ratio of Palestinian to Israeli deaths is supported by the evidence (see Figure 4 below).

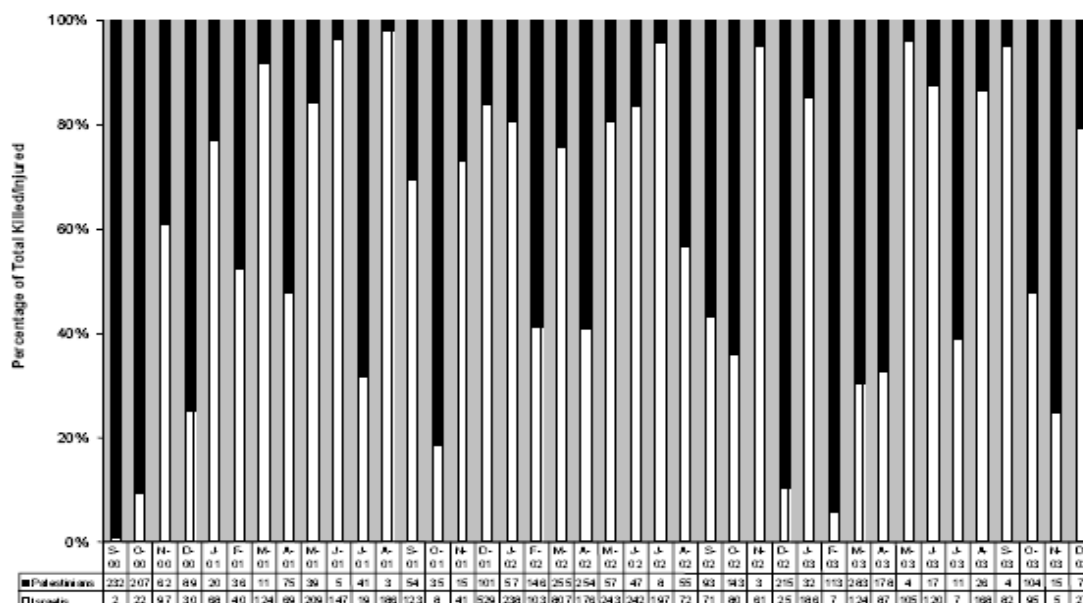
¹⁷⁶ Azet al-Rushuq, “Cessation of the Martyrdom Operations is an Urgent Israeli-American demand”, *al-Hayat* (London), May 22, 2002.

¹⁷⁷ *Al-Jazeera* television program “Opposite Direction,” August 20, 2002

¹⁷⁸ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

Figure 4¹⁷⁹

Percentages of Palestinians & Israelis killed/injured, 2000-2003



A Palestinian youth explained it this way:

“If it is considered moral and justifiable for the Israeli army to kill over 19 Palestinian civilians, including many children, and destroy their houses on top of their heads just to kill a wanted Palestinian activist, why is it not OK for Palestinians to go after settlers and soldiers while other Israelis stay indifferent as we are getting slaughtered on a daily basis? We do not have a highly advanced weaponry with which to face a regular army. All we are in control of are our bodies. We do not like or want to die. But if this is what it takes to terrorize them as they brutalize us all the time, why not do it?”

*(Palestinian youth)*¹⁸⁰

Dr Ramadan Abdallah Shallah, secretary-general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, uses the same rationale to explain the logic behind using ‘body bombers’ against Israeli targets:

“Our enemy possesses the most sophisticated weapons in the world and its army is trained to a very high standard...We have nothing with which to repel killing and thuggery against us except the weapon of martyrdom. It is

¹⁷⁹ Hafez, Mohammed; Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study; *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29:165–185, 2006

¹⁸⁰ An extract from an interview conducted in March 2003 by Dr. Hisham Ahmed in the course of his research on Palestinian resistance. The name of the interviewee was kept anonymous for security reasons at his request.

easy and costs us only our lives. Human bombs cannot be defeated, not even by nuclear bombs."¹⁸¹

According to Abdulaziz Al Rantisi, a Hamas leader in Gaza who was assassinated in an Israeli helicopter missile strike on 17 April 2004, "Hamas uses these tactics and means of struggle because it lacks F-16s, Apaches, tanks and missiles, and so we use any means that we have [...] because we are under occupation and are weak"¹⁸². A suicide attack serves as a weapon of retaliation and deterrence. But above all, it is intended to have a "profound negative impact on the Israeli public's sense of personal security, as it is aimed at causing devastating physical damage, through which it inflicts profound fear and anxiety"¹⁸³. Furthermore, such attacks are used to "instill a feeling of helplessness in the [targeted] population" and to make them conclude "they have no way of protecting themselves against such attacks"¹⁸⁴. In other words,

*"What the Palestinian suicide bombers are doing with these actions is telling the Israelis that we can reach them anywhere. We are there. As long as you don't recognize us and don't want us to have a state, Israel can claim that it's establishing security, but they must also know that we can reach them anywhere. This is what the Palestinian suicide bombers are demonstrating by their actions. Israelis will not have security as long as they don't want to give us our state."*¹⁸⁵

A report by Hamas, published in its London-based journal, *Falastin al-Muslima* (Islamic Palestine), catalogued the achievements of suicide bombings for the Palestinian struggle in instrumental terms. In part one the report states that in 1999, settlements grew at a rate of 12 percent; in 2000, they grew at a rate of eight percent; and in 2001 at a rate of five percent. Moreover, fewer people came to live in

¹⁸¹ Sprinzak (2000)

¹⁸² Goldenberg 2002a.

¹⁸³ Schweitzer, Yoram: "Suicide Terrorism: Development & Characteristics"; ICT, April 21, 2000.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Nura Karmi (2003), Coordinator of Women's Programs for Sabeel, the Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem.

Israel in 2001 (about 43,000 immigrants), whereas in the previous year, it was 60,000. Many Israelis are leaving Israel to live in the US and Canada and elsewhere due to the worsening security situation. Finally, fewer Israelis use public transportation and restaurants; more are using medication to remain calm.¹⁸⁶ In part two, the report claims that suicide bombings contributed to a decline in tourism in Israel, resulting in many tourist workers losing their jobs; 35 hotels and 50 tourist services had to close down. Unemployment on the whole went up as well.¹⁸⁷ In part three, the report states that despite the low number of Israeli soldiers killed during the Intifada, its psychological impact on the IDF was tremendous. The report claims that as many as 11,200 have deserted the army, refusing to serve in the occupied territories.¹⁸⁸ Although these claims may be questionable, the report is a reflection of Hamas' instrumental reasoning behind the use of suicide bombers.

Another claim that is often made in support of suicide bombings is their effectiveness in relation to the strategy of negotiations. The more radical Palestinian factions have consistently argued that negotiations have led to a dead end. An alternative strategy was needed and necessary to achieve the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. In light of Hezbollah's "victory" in southern Lebanon in mid-2000, when Israel withdrew its troops from the security zone, and in light of the PA's failure to establish a viable and sovereign Palestinian state in late 2000, a violent uprising was considered the best strategy to force the Israelis to withdraw from Palestinian lands. In a debate between Yasser Abd Rabbo, Minister of Media and Culture, and Ramadan Abdulla Shalah, General Secretary of Islamic Jihad, which

¹⁸⁶ *Falastin al-Muslima*, "al-Istitan Taraja wa-malyoun Israili Harabou lil-Aysh fi al-Kharaj" [Settlements are declining and a million Israeli have fled to live abroad], April 2002, quoted in Hafez (2006)

¹⁸⁷ *Falastin al-Muslima*, "al-Siyaha Tadharart wal-Numou Taqalas wal-Tajirah al-Kharijiya Tarajat" [Tourism has suffered, growth has slowed, and International Trade has declined], April 2002, quoted in Hafez (2006).

¹⁸⁸ *Falastin al-Muslima*, "Irtifa Halat al-Farar wal-Intihar wa-Asiyan al-Awamer" [The number of (military) desertions, suicides, and disobedience of orders have increased], April 2002, quoted in Hafez (2006).

was aired on *al-Jazeera* television, Abd Rabbo requested a halt to suicide bombings. His warned that “it is obvious that Sharon wants to destroy the Palestinian Authority, its institutions and infrastructure. He has used the suicide operations as a pretext to do so. He wants to take advantage of the September 11 attacks [on America] to paint the Palestinians with the same brush as al-Qaeda’s terrorism so he can avoid the formation of a Palestinian state. Therefore, we must not fall into his trap.”¹⁸⁹ He went on to argue that “we need the support of the international community so we can balance against the Israeli occupation that legitimizes itself by portraying Palestinians as terrorists. Moreover, we should not carry out operations against civilians because it gives Israelis the excuses they need – and the international legitimacy – to harm the Palestinian public and destroy its accomplishments and institutions.” Abdulla Shalah’s responded by arguing that “years of negotiations have not achieved the basic goals and rights of the Palestinian people. History has shown, whether history with the Israelis or history of the oppressed people around the world, that resistance is the only way to achieve your objectives.”¹⁹⁰

In another debate on “martyrdom operations” aired on *al-Jazeera*, political analyst Hani al-Masri, who was one of those who signed a communiqué that called for an end to suicide bombings, claimed that even though suicide bombings had achieved certain objectives, in general they were harmful for the national goals of the Palestinian people.¹⁹¹ Specifically, suicide bombings had militarized the uprising and given Israel an excuse to use its superior military capabilities to suppress the resistance. Even if the Palestinians were now, with the use of suicide bombings,

¹⁸⁹ *Al-Jazeera* “Opposite Direction” program hosted by Faisal al-Qasim, “Al-Sulta al-Falastinia wa-Harakat al-Muqawama” [The Palestinian Authority and the Resistance Movements], aired on December 18, 2001, quoted in Hafez (2006)

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

able to kill more Israelis than before, that in itself was not reason enough to continue with the strategy of suicide attacks. The goal was not to kill more people, but to achieve the objectives of the Palestinian people. Al-Masri argued that suicide bombings had unified the Israelis behind the most extreme and racist elements in Israeli society. This had made it difficult if not impossible for the Palestinians to negotiate a fair and just settlement to the conflict. Finally, al-Masri concluded that after the September 11 attacks on America, international support had turned against the Palestinians because of the suicide attacks against civilians.

In response to al-Masri's arguments, Muhammad Nazzal, political bureau member of Hamas, countered that suicide operations were instrumental at their core. Nazzal argued that it is not the resistance that led to an unfavourable conclusion of the struggle, but rather the failed strategy of negotiations among unequal powers that gave Israel control of over 80 percent of the land (of historic Palestine). According to Nazzal, the resistance was preventing such a conclusion by depriving the Israelis of security, harming their economy, and disrupting their occupation. As for the charge that suicide bombings kill civilians, Nazzal offered a standard reply that is common to most of the resistance groups: In a war between two states, those who fight are combatants and those that do not are civilians. However, with regard to the Israeli occupation, this is not the case. It is not a struggle between two armies or two states. It is a struggle between a colonizing power with mightier forces and a modernized army, and a helpless people with modest arms. According to Nazzal, Israeli society is a militarized colonialist society with few genuine civilians. "We define civilians as those who do not carry arms and do not fight. In the case of Israel, this applies to those who are less than 18 years old and those who are elderly; the rest are combatants. We do not kill children. We

could easily go to preschools or public places where children hang out or attack the elderly, but we do not. The rest, however, whether men or women, are forcefully conscripted into the army and once a year they are recalled for at least 40 days and in cases of war or emergency.”¹⁹²

The secular Palestinian groups adopted suicide terrorism, at least in part, to compete with their Islamic rivals in the factional struggle over public support. In interviews with Fatah members, they claim that the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which emerged from the ranks of Fatah, adopted suicide bombings at least in part to compete with Islamists who seemed to be outperforming them. Many Fatah members believed that Fatah had originally initiated the uprising and Hamas only joined later. But when it adopted suicide bombings, Hamas seemed to take the lead in the struggle to liberate Palestine. One of the Fatah militants termed this development as “healthy competition” in the same way that European football (soccer) teams compete with each other by constantly striving to be creative in their strategies.¹⁹³ In reality, the adoption of suicide bombings was more than just “healthy competition”. It was about recapturing the spotlight that seemed to be unfairly taken from them by the Islamist factions. Another reason why Fatah adopted suicide bombings was because they felt Israeli escalations, including the targeted assassinations of its leaders, especially Raed al-Karmi in January 2002, called for a commensurate response to deter Israel from similar attacks. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades initially emerged as different factions with names such as *Kateb al-Awda*

¹⁹² Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder and leader of Hamas until he was assassinated in March 2004, also rejects the notion that Israeli society contains civilians: “Are there any civilians in Israel? They are all soldiers, men and women, except those religious persons, who do not serve in the army, the rest are all soldiers. The only difference is that they wear civilian clothes when they are in Israel, and military clothes when they come to us. The 20,000 or 30,000 reserve soldiers, where did they come from? Are they not part of the Israeli people? Were they not civilians?” *Al-Hayat*, May 22, 2002.

¹⁹³ Quoted in Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

(Returnees Brigades) or *Kateb al-Shahid Thabet Thabet* (The Martyr Thabet Thabet Brigades). These groups then merged under the umbrella organization Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. From December 2001 to January 2002, these factions avoided suicide bombings, but beginning in 2002, they employed them with vengeance. They were the first to send female suicide bombers, which may have elicited Islamic Jihad and later Hamas to send female bombers of their own (Hamas only sent one).¹⁹⁴

The instrumental reasoning of the Palestinian organizations suggests that strategic, not religious or cultural, considerations are the reasons why they adopted the use of suicide bombings. However, the importance of religion, nationalism, or community in motivating individuals to carry out suicide attacks should not be underestimated. What motivates organizations is not necessarily what motivates individuals. A careful reading of the individual Palestinian suicide bombers' last will suggests multiple motivations that include religious inspirations, desire for vengeance, and commitment to family, community, and Islam. Moreover, the Palestinian organizations exerted a great deal of effort and resources to honor, venerate, and celebrate the "heroic" deeds of their martyrs, thereby promoting a culture of martyrdom based on religious appeals and rituals to convince the Palestinian public of the value of suicide bombings. To understand the motivations of individual bombers, we need to look at the interactions between strategic considerations, religious frameworks, nationalist appeals, and community ties. If the organizations sense that the public whose support they are seeking perceives the use of suicide bombers in a positive light, and this public also shows support for

¹⁹⁴ Hafez interviews with Muhammad Daraghme, *Associated Press* journalist covering the Fatah armed groups in the West Bank, on December 12, 2003 in Ramallah; Tayseer Naserallah (Abu Basel), member of Fatah and Palestinian National Council, on December 16, 2003 in Nablus; and Faye Qanan, Secretary General of Fatah Movement (Tulkarem), on December 19, 2003 in Tulkarem. See also Human Rights Watch, *Erased In a Moment: Suicide Bombing Attacks Against Israeli Civilians*, October 2002 (New York: Human Rights Watch), and Mia Bloom, "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share and Outbidding," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, 1, Spring 2004.

other organizations who are making use of suicide attackers, then chances are that they will also adopt this tactic and invest in the 'marketing' and glorification of their actions.¹⁹⁵ Decisions about whether to increase or reduce the number and magnitude of the suicide operations, or whether to change the targets of the suicide attacks, can also be seen to be as a direct consequence of the support that the organizational leadership believes they are receiving from their 'constituency'.

From the above considerations, it can thus be concluded that the use of suicide bombers would most likely be suspended under the following three conditions. First, if the organizations' goals have been achieved. Second, if Israel finds effective ways of containing the suicide attacks and the organizations' leadership become aware that this strategy is no longer beneficial. Third, if the public the organizations seek to represent no longer condones the use of this method.

A review of attacks committed by Hamas in the years 1993 to 2004 shows that the percentage of attacks employing suicide bombers gradually increased over the years to 63.4 per cent of the total of actions perpetrated by the organization.¹⁹⁶ Ami Pedahzur found a similar profile in the operations of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The percentage of suicide attacks lies at 64.3 percent of the total of attacks perpetrated by the organization. With regard to Fatah (and its military wing, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), it appears that the heads of the military arm of Fatah, who joined in the use of suicide terrorism only in the beginning of the year 2002, nearly ten years after Hamas and the PIJ had already instigated the method, quite capably internalized the lessons of their precursors.¹⁹⁷ Fatah became the organization making the greatest use of suicide bombing attacks (85.7 percent of the total of

¹⁹⁵ Gill, Paul: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing, 159 IJCV : Vol. 1 (2) 2007, pp. 142–159

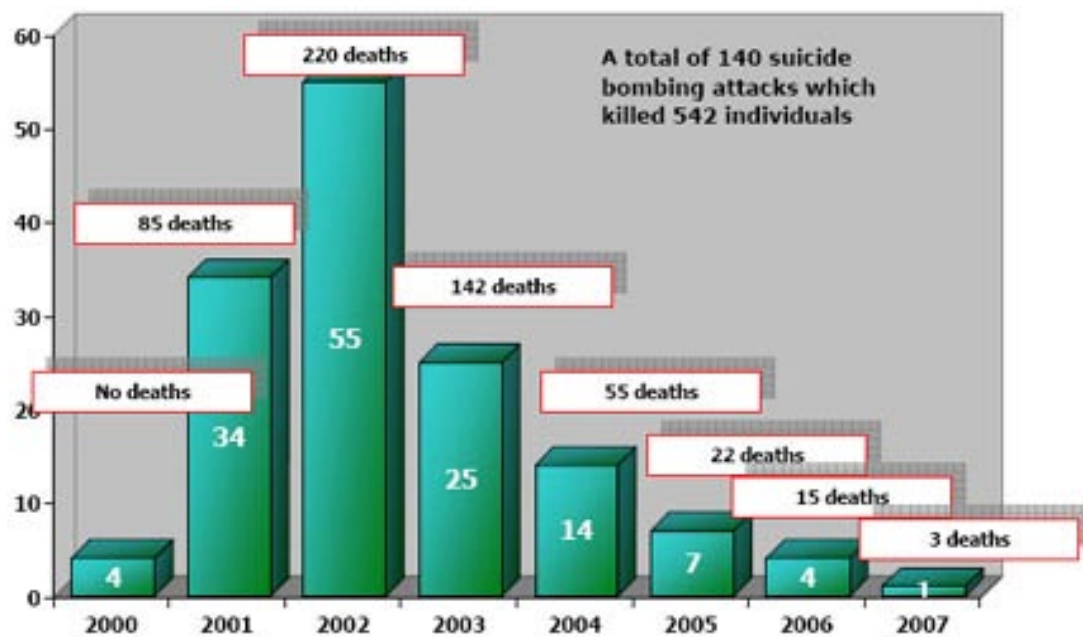
¹⁹⁶ Ami Pedahzur *Suicide Terrorism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005, pp.16-17

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

actions) in the conflict.¹⁹⁸ The fact that all Palestinian organizations employed similar modes of action may in fact indicate a trend of mutual imitation. However, at the same time, it is worth noting that all these organizations share the same enemy – Israel. Therefore, it follows that the constraints created by the Israeli defense strategy have had an effect on all of the organizations' modes of action and their ability to carry out these particular methods.

Figure 5¹⁹⁹

Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel Since the Declaration of Principles (Sept 1993)



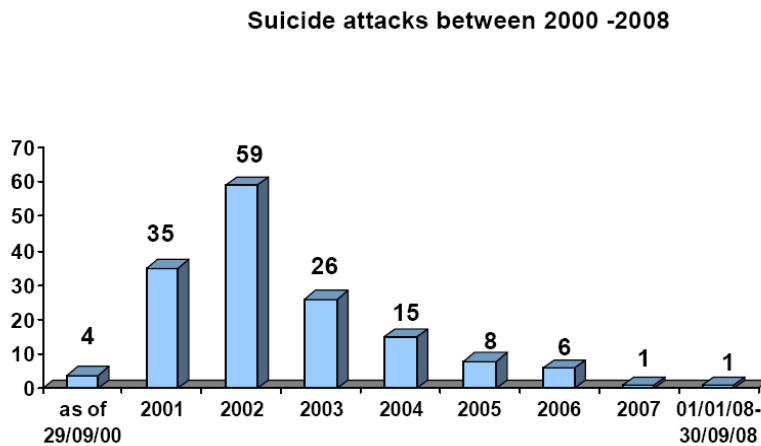
¹⁹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹⁹ Source: Israeli Intelligence and Terrorism Center 2006

Figure 6²⁰⁰

Suicide Attacks from 2000 - 2008

Statistical breakdown of attacks of differing types, since the beginning of the current conflict



During September, no suicide attacks occurred.

Since the beginning of 2008, one suicide attack was carried out (Dimona – February 4), and one woman was killed as a result.

3.2.1.2 Religious Dynamics

To understand the acceptance of suicidal violence in Palestinian society one must also understand the cultural shift that has characterized Muslim societies since the 1970s. After decades of western secularization, the Muslim world witnessed an Islamic revival characterized by the spread of Islamic networks, social movements, and political parties. Networks of charity and non-governmental mosques were created by Islamic activists free from the “corrupting” influence of the secular state. The Iranian revolution in 1979 reinforced the trend toward Islamic resurgence and activism as Islamists appeared to be effective agents of social change.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionImages/english/TerrorInfo/Sept_Monthly_Summary_2008-en.pdf

²⁰¹ It is outside the scope of this report to discuss the causes and dynamics of Islamic revivalism witnessed since the 1970s. For an introduction to theories on Islamic activism, see Chapter 1 of Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

Palestinian society did not escape this phenomenon. Large segments of the Palestinian population living in the West Bank and Gaza became increasingly religious as a result of Islamic revivalism.²⁰² The rise of Hamas as a possible competitor of the nationalist camp in 1988, the success of the Islamic Bloc in various universities in the West Bank and Gaza since the 1980s, the increase in Islamic charity networks, especially in Gaza, created resources and a clear legitimacy for the Islamic movement.²⁰³ Although Fatah remained the dominant organization representing Palestinian aspirations for independence, Hamas' ranks increased quickly during the first Intifada.

Islamists in Palestine maintain that Islamic lands have been stolen by the Jews in alliance with powerful western forces.²⁰⁴ Given this great injustice, it is the obligation of every Muslim inside and outside Palestine to wage a *jihad* of liberation. This notion of *jihad* as an individual obligation is also proclaimed by Fathi Shiqaqi, one of the founders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.²⁰⁵ It also received support from many other Islamic scholars. To justify their claim for the necessity of sacrifice in Palestine, Hamas and Islamic Jihad referred to the abundant Islamic texts concerning *jihad* and martyrdom in the *Quran* and prophetic traditions. These passages urge Muslims to fight persecution and injustice in the path of God and not

²⁰² Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994); Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996); Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2000).

²⁰³ Sara Roy, "The Transformation of Islamic NGOs in Palestine," *Middle East Report* (Spring 2000), 24-27; International Crisis Group, "Islamic Social Welfare Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legitimate Target?" *ICG Middle East Report* 13 (April 2, 2003), 1-31; Ian Fisher, "Defining Hamas: Roots in Charity and Branches of Violence," *New York Times*, June 16, 2003.

²⁰⁴ Hafez, Mohammed, *Manufacturing Human Bombs: Strategy, Culture and Conflict in the Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers* (Unpublished Research Paper, 2004).

²⁰⁵ See chapter 2 of Meir Hatina, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine: The Islamic Jihad Movement* (Moshe Dayan Center for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv University, 2001).

to fear death because those killed in battle will be rewarded by God.²⁰⁶ In interviews with Hamas supporters at al-Najah University in Nablus and Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, Hafez asked about the logic behind militarizing the uprising and deploying suicide bombers against the powerful Israeli state, which had not shown any willingness to concede an inch in the face of Palestinian violence. Militants frame their contemporary struggle against Israel as part of the Islamic tradition of *jihad* and martyrdom by the weak against the strong, the righteous over the unjust.²⁰⁷ By putting the emphasis on martyrdom as opposed to suicide, it becomes very difficult to criticize the bombers directly. One may question the goals and tactics of their organizations, just as one may question the policies of states at war, but one rarely questions the heroism of individual martyrs in the same way societies rarely question the gallantry of their fallen soldiers.²⁰⁸ Iyad Sarraj, a Palestinian psychiatrist, perhaps put it best: “You can say, ‘I condemn terror, I condemn killing civilians,’ but you can’t say, ‘I condemn martyrs,’ because martyrs are prophets.”²⁰⁹ Suzanne Goldenberg concludes that

*“Religious indoctrination is no longer central to the preparation of the bombers – especially for secular groups such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. But the iron fist of Ariel Sharon – the incursions into West Bank towns and refugee camps by Israeli armour and helicopter gunships, the mass arrests and lengthy curfews – has only increases the determination of those who would embrace martyrdom.”*²¹⁰

Islam is used by the organizations as a mobilizing ideology to indoctrinate believers into not accepting oppressions and subjugation.

²⁰⁶ Keith Lewinstein, “The Revaluation of Martyrdom in Early Islam,” in Margaret Cormack, ed. *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 78-91.

²⁰⁷ Hafez, Mohammed, *Manufacturing Human Bombs: Strategy, Culture and Conflict in the Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers* (Unpublished Research Paper, 2004).

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ See interview with James Bennet, “The Bombers,” New York Times, June 21, 2002.

²¹⁰ Goldenberg 2002a.

Undoubtedly, it is the fact that life under occupation is intolerable and unbearable which leads Palestinian youngsters to sacrifice their bodies and their targets to draw attention to the Palestinian cause. Ahmed (2003) writes that “it has no longer become a far-fetched conclusion that Sharon, by virtue of his reckless assault on Palestinians, has created a societal factory of suicide bombers not only among Muslims, but also among Palestinian Christians, hitherto unaccustomed to consider resorting to such measures.”

3.2.1.3 The Group Process

A number of social psychological processes come into effect once an individual has joined an organization for the purpose of perpetrating a suicide attack. First, he is cast into a social reality that affirms his “newborn” identity as a future “martyr”. The suicide bombers are organized into small cells and given intense and personal spiritual training. An important element in creating this “social reality” involves the use of language. The would-be suicide bomber isn’t referred to as a terrorist or even as a freedom fighter. Instead, he is depicted as a “martyr” even before he carries out the attack, namely as a “living martyr” (*al Shahid al hai*). The “living martyrs” are subject to indoctrination which contains elements of glorification of their own group, religion and their special saintly status. They are told their families will not only be guaranteed a place in heaven, but will also be given considerable rewards in this life.²¹¹

²¹¹ David Brooks, The Atlantic Monthly; June 2002; The Culture of Martyrdom; Volume 289, No. 6; 18.

Friedkin²¹² argues that some organizations inculcate their members with a sense of duty and portray individual suicide as an honorable sacrifice for the sake of their oppressed community. Thus, the suicide operations become ‘obligatory altruistic suicides’ (as opposed to egoistic ones in Durkheim’s terminology, see discussion in chapter 1.6). They are also fed extensive anti-enemy propaganda²¹³. The enemy (Israel) is referred to as the “enemy of God” and is analogized to groups known for their inhumanity (Nazis), or destructiveness (barbarians, Vandals), or referred to as despicable criminals (murderers).²¹⁴ With these linguistic tactics an idealized in-group is perceived to be fighting a dehumanized enemy. In this battle between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ or ‘right’ against ‘wrong’, both sacrifices and atrocities are justified. As Berman and Laitin note “the empathy for anonymous innocent”²¹⁵ is missing. This perspective eases their adjustment to a life in constant conflict by creating a social reality wherein aggression against the evil enemy is the only option. Certainly, such strategies of delegitimation and dehumanization are not unique to suicide terrorism; they are often part of any aggressive behavior toward fellow human beings including state terrorism, for example.

Berman and Laitin observed that it would be difficult to keep up suicide attacks, even if they seemed to be the only efficient tactic, if the suicide bombers themselves did not have other motivations as well. Religious motivation alone, such as the “religious promise of eternal grace”, is not enough of a reason. Other more secular motivations may be the belief that their individual sacrifice will benefit the

²¹² Friedkin, N.E. (in press). The interpersonal influence systems and organized suicides of death cults. In E.M. Meyersson-Milgrom (Ed.) Suicide Missions and the Market for Martyrs, A Multidisciplinary Approach. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

²¹³ Moghadam, 2003.

²¹⁴ Kruglanski, Arie and Golec, Agnieszka, “Individual Motivations, The Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism,” in E.M. Meyersson Milgrom (Ed.) Suicide Missions and the Market for Martyrs, A Multidisciplinary Approach. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

²¹⁵ Berman and Laitin, p. 13.

nation and grant them a place in history.²¹⁶ Besides religion, many suicide attacks have been perpetrated in the name of ethnicity and nationalism. Palestinian suicide terrorists perceive their actions as “dying for their land”, in combat against the Israeli occupation.²¹⁷

This is not to say that every suicide bomber who commits him/herself to suicide missions for religious reasons is an expert on the Koran. Nor is every suicide bomber about to commit a suicide mission for political reasons an expert on political ideology. What is more probable is that the suicide bombers place their trust in “epistemic authorities” who explain what the organization’s ideological strategy asks of them at a given time²¹⁸. The main two types of “epistemic authorities” are the expert and the group. A good example of expert epistemic authority is the role Sayid Muhammad Husayn Fadlalla played in the use of suicide bombings by Hezbollah. Fadlalla is Hezbollah’s supreme spiritual leader to whom the commanders looked to for approval of using suicide tactics. At first Fadlalla expressed moral reservations about perpetrating suicide attacks, but he subsequently gave them his full support. This spiritual “seal of approval” resulted in a series of suicide attacks in Lebanon that has since made history.

The second trusted “epistemic authority” for an individual is the group or community, whose consent establishes whether suicide bombings are justifiable and desirable. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the Palestinian community’s support for suicide bombings increased steadily from 1996 to 2002. Whereas in March 1996 it was still ‘only’ around 20%, it rose to 70-80 % in favor by June

²¹⁶ Kruglanski, Arie and Golec, Agnieszka, “Individual Motivations, The Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism,” in E.M. Meyersson Milgrom (Ed.) *Suicide Missions and the Market for Martyrs, A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

²¹⁷ Moghadam, 2003.

²¹⁸ See Kruglanski, Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, Ellis, Bar, Pierro & Mannetti, in press.

2002.²¹⁹ The suicide bombers are dependent on expert and group authorities to tell them what to do, even on a personal decision such as the taking of their own life.

In this regard, Friedkin points out that it is in the organization's vital interest that its members do not have "minds of their own", do not value their own judgments and opinions and are susceptible to the group's influence.²²⁰ Therefore, the organizations cut off their members' access to external support to purposefully diminish their self-weight or authority and train the future martyrs in isolated places, away from family and friends. The organization compels the suicide bomber to sacrifice individuality and personal needs in the name of the cause.²²¹ The organizations use public commitment and social pressure to create martyrs who are "reliable and committed", and who will not change their minds midway through the task and put the whole organization at risk, wasting weeks or months of preparations.²²² As Merari (1990, p. 208) explains, the final element of the group process that the suicide bomber is trained in is the method of public commitment that creates a psychological "point of no return".

According to Merari (July 13, 2000), practically none of the suicide bombers in the Palestinian case have changed their minds midway. However, a more recent study by Berman and Laitin shows cases where Palestinian suicide bombers have defected between the years 2000 and 2003. A change of mind constitutes a problem that the organizations have to guard against by using various tactics of social pressure.

²¹⁹ See Kruglanski and Golec,

²²⁰ Friedkin, N.E. (in press). The interpersonal influence systems and organized suicides of death cults. In E.M. Meyersson-Milgrom (Ed.) *Suicide Missions and the Market for Martyrs, A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Berman & Laitin.

Nicole Argo, a Ph.D. candidate at MIT, conducted interviews with intercepted Palestinian suicide bombers held in Israeli prisons. She illustrates how feelings of community were expressed in the motivations of the would-be bombers.²²³

Following is a sample of five suicide bombers reflecting on their motives:

"I didn't decide in one moment [to carry out an attack]. I had been thinking about it from the beginning of the Intifada, looking for an opportunity and an organization to help me do it. There were few factors affecting the decision – the stress of the occupation, the humiliation of my cousin being searched by soldiers, the killings...against kids – and the action was in honour of the kids who were killed... I did this because of the suffering of the Palestinian people. The falling of *shuhada* [those martyred by Israeli forces]...and the destruction everywhere in Palestine...I did this for God and for the Palestinian people. I didn't think about the consequences of the operation – if it would make things better or not. I don't understand politics...but that we are able to react against their bombings and their killing of inhabitants of the camp is important. My mission made them (the camp) happy, even though they were punished a lot [for it] in Jenin. The land and trees and houses were punished; nothing remains that they did not punish. I believe the operation would hurt the enemy...Also [a] successful mission greatly influences society. It raises the morale of the people; they are happy, they feel strong. I know the bombing will hurt the Israelis and prove to them that we are still ready to fight. [So much] happened to our camp because of the destruction – someone told me the operation would be a benefit to the camp, to create pressure on the Israelis in order that they retreat from the territory...The most important thing was that we should make an operation in the heart of Israel after the [Israeli military] penetration in order to prove that we were not influenced by the military attack."

This shows that in the case of the Palestinian suicide bombers, one cannot separate nationalism from religious revivalism. Religious revivalism, nationalist conflict, and community ties underline the culture of martyrdom that characterised the second Palestinian Intifada. The suicide bombers are dying for "God and country". The different groups framed martyrdom as an act of redemption, empowerment, and defiance against unjust authorities. Volunteers for suicide

²²³ Argo, "The Istish'hadin," forthcoming.

attacks were not brainwashed victims of opportunistic organizations, nor were they manipulated or fooled by calculating terrorists. Rather, they were more *inspired* by the opportunity given to them by the different groups to fulfill their obligation to God, sacrifice for the nation, and avenge a grieving people.

3.2.1.3.1 *The Individual Radicalizes Within a Group Setting*

At the heart of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict stands a deep sense of injustice beyond profound frustration and despair. In their struggle against the occupation, the Palestinian organizations resorted to suicide bombings, demonstrating the failure of other attempted tactics. Israel's continued repression created an abnormal state of mind in Palestinian society. The lack of normalcy in daily life and the profound frustration the Palestinians feel created a variety of psychological motives for resisting the Israeli occupation through the use of suicide bombings. And the various groups used this to their advantage.

Almost every Palestinian young male has suffered some form of hardship or humiliation as a result of the Israeli occupation, such as arrest, beatings, injury or deportation. Every Palestinian has felt the stranglehold of Israeli military control on their lives. Ariel Merari, a psychologist at Tel Aviv University, depicted that "intense struggles produce several types of people with the potential willingness to sacrifice themselves for a cause."²²⁴ Munir al-Makdah, a trainer of suicide bombers, explains that "much of the work is already done by the suffering these people have been subject to... Only 10 percent comes from me. The suffering and living away from their land has given the person 90 percent of what he needs to become a martyr. All

²²⁴ Hisham Ahmed, 'Palestinian Resistance and 'Suicide Bombing': Causes and Consequences', Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *Root Causes of Terrorism*, Routledge, New York, 2005

we do is provide guidance and help strengthen his faith and help set the objectives for him.”²²⁵

Social psychologists argue that conformity is a big factor in explaining behavior in a group setting. Leaders of the organizations make sure that the suicide bombers conform to the norm until moments before the suicide bombing. Fellow group members closely guard the bomber. This guards against a mindset change of the bomber. In the Palestinian case, if the would-be bomber showed any signs of weakness, a senior trainer was called to reinforce his determination²²⁶. Eyewitness reports of suicide bombings in Israel consistently described three or four men dropping the bomber off at the destination.

In intermittent phases, the bombers are dispatched from some Palestinian areas more frequently than other areas. This may be because the bombers are trained in the group together, and after the first bombing the next in line feels pressured to become a bomber as well. There are many examples of this. In May 2003, three university students from Hebron carried out attacks in Israel over the course of three days. A fourth suicide bomber from Hebron followed one month later. Twelve suicide bombers from Nablus conducted attacks between December 2, 2001 and March 30, 2002. After that, no suicide bombings were carried out by Nablus residents in the following five weeks. Then, ten suicide bombers from Nablus broke this phase between May 7 and August 6, after which again no bombers from Nablus emerged for another two months before four more carried out their operations between October 27, 2002 and January 5, 2003. However, when there were no bombers from Nablus, they came from Jenin. For example, between 25 May, 2001 and 12 August, 2001, there were seven suicide bombers from Jenin. Then there

²²⁵ Cited in Davis 2003, 154.

²²⁶ Hassan 2001.

were no bombers from Jenin for almost two months. Between October 7, 2001 and December 9, 2001, three Jenin residents went on suicide missions. Then, there were no bombers from Jenin until March 5, 2002, when another five went on suicide missions before June 5, 2002. Again, there was a two-month period with no suicide bombers from Jenin. However, four bombers followed between August 4 and October 21. Of the eighteen months covered here, there is only eight weeks of overlap between the two towns dispatching suicide bombers. What is interesting is that this pattern of intermittent phases can also be seen in Bethlehem, Hebron, Tulkarem and Kalkilya. This pattern of intermittent phases is an illustration of how domestic competition factors played out between the different Palestinian factions. A Hamas suicide bombing by its cell in Nablus, for example, would create pressure on the rival Nablus cells of Fatah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the PFLP to carry out suicide bombings as well for fear of losing the support of the local community. Along with Pedahzur and Perliger's social network analysis of Palestinian organizations (2006), this finding also supports Bloom's thesis (2005) that inter-organizational rivalry factors played an important role in the development of Palestinian suicide bombings.

3.3 Individual Motivations Used to the Organizational Advantage

Several studies and research have focused on the pathological aspect of violence (Gordon 2002, Post 1990), socialization factors (Atran, 2003, Post 2005, Sageman 2005), the applicability of the rational choice theory (Gupta 2004), religious fanaticism (Pipes 2004), and revenge for personal suffering (Margalit 2003), although this list is by no means complete. These studies have all contributed

to a better understanding of individual motivations, but their generalizations are problematic. These studies only focused on the “supply side” of joining an organization, and by only focusing on the individual factors that contribute to creating a large pool of recruits, they ignore the obstacles to membership.²²⁷

The leaders of the organizations carefully choose who can join their ranks. This is important so as to ensure the secretive nature of their work. The risk of a new recruit being an informant or going back on their commitment to carry out the attack is too high. As will be outlined below, the role of familial and friendship ties is also key to understanding how members are selected, since pre-existing familial and friendship ties do play a role in the recruitment process. The motivations to become a suicide bomber should be viewed as a process (depicted in Figure 7 below). The individual is aware that his/her social status may increase due to their membership in the organization. Post et al’s interviews with intercepted suicide bombers (2005) reveal that they are aware of the potential of increasing their social status and that this is a main motivator in joining an organization. Yet although this awareness may have existed before, only after the individuals experience a catalyst (i.e. traumatic event) does the desire to join become significant. According to Silke (2003), the catalyst could be a response to personal suffering, revenge for imprisonment,²²⁸ an act of violence by opposition forces²²⁹, a response to restrictions on movement, a response to personal desperation, or frustration of personal goals.²³⁰ The list of catalysts and examples is infinite.

²²⁷ Gill, Paul: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing 159 IJCV : Vol. 1 (2) 2007, pp. 142–159.

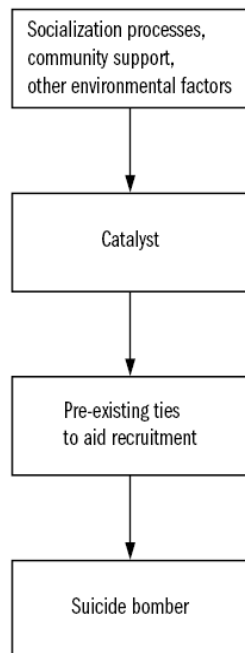
²²⁸ Yusef Ali Mohammed Zughayer (22) and Suleiman Musa Dahayneh (24) both served time in Israeli prisons. They conducted a double suicide bombing on November 6, 1998, in Jerusalem.

²²⁹ Taysir Ahmed Ajrami (22) carried out a suicide bombing on November 26, 2001. His suicide note said the attack was in response to the killing of five Palestinian children the previous week by an Israeli mine.

²³⁰ Three bombers carried out three separate acts over the course of one weekend in Israel. All three had attended Hebron Polytechnic University, which had been closed by IDF forces months earlier.

Figure 7²³¹

The path to becoming a suicide bomber



In their analysis of suicide bombers, Kimhi and Even (2004) show that the social environment rather than a personality flaw induces people to join militant organizations. Propaganda, proclamations supporting suicide bombings from epistemic leaders (as described above), and a sense of threat due to ongoing conflict creates a pool of willing recruits for organizations.²³² Propaganda that turns the suicide bomber into a celebrity plays a large role in persuading others to make the same decision. Through interviews with terrorists, Silke (2003) describes the process of becoming a terrorist as primarily an issue of socialization. Studies on the recruitment processes of terrorist organizations highlight the important role of pre-existing familial or friendship ties. Post et al. (2005) found that familial ties and

²³¹ From: Gill, Paul, A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing; International Journal of Conflict and Violence, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 142-159, 2007.

²³² Gill, Paul: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing, 159 IJCV : Vol. 1 (2) 2007, pp. 142–159

friendship ties are key to the recruitment process of Palestinian groups. Examples include husband and wife bombers in Palestine, a sister of a deceased Islamic Jihad militant in October 2003, a sister of an imprisoned Fatah operative in May 2003, a nephew of a prominent leader of Hamas in March 2001, and a nephew of a prominent Fatah leader in May 2005. Examples of best friends carrying out double suicide bombings include attacks in December 2001, January 2003, September 2003 and March 2004. Seven members of the same Palestinian football club carried out a series of suicide attacks in late 2002 and early 2003.²³³

With respect to the individual motivations for carrying out a suicide attack, these can be political/nationalistic, religious, ideological, economic, community, sociological, psychological, personal, or familial.²³⁴ Hamas claims to have thousands of self-recruited individual bombers (most of whom it allegedly has to turn away).²³⁵ The reasons for this may be the experiences of deep personal traumatization and loss that leads some to seek out the ideological message of those promoting *jihadist* methods. This message helps traumatized individuals to find a framework for addressing their emotional suffering and sense of dismal future. Yet, however the organizations' ideologies supporting suicide terrorism may address the psychosocial needs of the individuals, the rationale behind the decision to become a suicide bomber must also be considered.²³⁶

However, traumatic stress alone is insufficient to cause an individual to consider becoming a suicide bomber. The majority of Palestinians have been deeply

²³³ Hammer and Zidan 2003.

²³⁴ Assaf Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26.2 (February/March 2003).

²³⁵ See: Nasra Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to Human Bombs," *The New Yorker* (November 19, 2001). Anne Speckhard, unpublished interview with Zacharia Zubeidi, leader of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in Jenin, who also claimed to have hundreds of volunteers for suicide missions (March 2005).

Speckhard & Akhmedova, "The Making of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2005, in press).

²³⁶ Anne Speckhard, from unpublished interviews with Palestinians.

traumatized, and yet most carry on with daily life despite enduring emotional pain and do not become suicide bombers. Traumatic experiences may form the psychological basis that make individuals open to the ideologies of the groups promoting suicide bombing. But it is not a decisive factor. The ideologies promoting suicide bombing must be present to provide the traumatized individual with the outlet, with a means of empowerment to strike back, to defend his community, to express his pain, and make sure that the enemy also feels that pain. The individual seeks to find meaning in and end to his suffering in an honorable way – avenging the community and becoming a hero. Ultimately, the traumatized individual seeks to enact justice in a situation in which s/he, rightly or wrongly, perceives no other way to seek justice. This process and actions take place in a manner that is justified by the group and by the local community.²³⁷

However impelling the individual motivations for carrying out suicide attacks might be, the survival instinct and the fear of death are still a powerful psychological factor. The above reasons and motivations do not suggest that any of the characteristics mentioned are either necessary or sufficient for an individual to become a suicide bomber. One need not be a traumatized adolescent, politically oppressed, and in need of asserting oneself and lacking legitimate outlets to become a suicide bomber. On the other hand, a person could be one or all of the above and yet not become a suicide bomber.²³⁸

²³⁷ Anne Spekhard, "Understanding Suicide Terrorism: Countering Human Bombs and Their Senders," 2004.

²³⁸ Kruglanski, Arie and Golec, Agnieszka, "Individual Motivations, The Group Process and Organizational Strategies in Suicide Terrorism," in E.M. Meyersson Milgrom (Ed.) *Suicide Missions and the Market for Martyrs, A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press

3.3.1 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers

Although gender did initially play a role in the organizational motivation for choosing whom to send on suicide missions, the preference being given to males, the Palestinian organizations began to open this option to women as it became more and more difficult to send male bombers across increasingly secure checkpoints. Women could more easily hide explosives by simulating pregnancy, and respect for the cultural modes of modesty at first prevented thorough searches of women (though with the increase in female bombers this changed). Furthermore, the first suicide bombings carried out by females had tremendous shock value.

In her interviews with family members of female Palestinian bombers, Barbara Victor²³⁹ claimed that strict role assignments in a very controlled society made the choice of martyrdom seem more attractive to those women who were unable or unwilling to fulfill their prescribed social roles (due to infertility, discovery of an illicit sexual relationship or pregnancy, etc.) and thus unable to return to the “normal” roles of becoming wives and mothers.

However, more recent interviews by Anne Speckhard with would-be female Palestinian bombers imprisoned in Israel suggest that the inability to fulfill “normal” roles is only a marginal motivator. One interviewee laughed when she was asked about Victor’s theories, saying that they are implausible.²⁴⁰ “For this you want to explode yourself? For infertility? This is stupidity. For having had illicit sexual relations? You will die for this? No. I can speak to God and He will forgive me.” She went on to say that people often search for such explanations, especially with regard to female bombers, and explained, “Every girl can decide for herself...if you want to

²³⁹ Barbara Victor, *Army of Roses: Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers*, Rodale Books, 2003.

²⁴⁰ Anne Speckhard unpublished Palestinian interviews March 2005.

die and you know you want to die. This is what is going on with exploding ourselves.”²⁴¹

Even so, an important difference between male and female suicide bombers is that men seeking to retaliate against a powerful enemy have many more options than women in conservative societies. Militant organizations in conservative societies are often unwilling to arm women to fight in battles or even to allow women to “martyr” themselves in scenarios in which they are likely to be killed. By limiting the possibilities for women to respond to traumatic stress (and, in particular, giving them few ways in which to either fight against or flee the sources of that stress) conservative societies might be forcing some women to be permanently frozen in a dissociative state. This in turn makes them more open to the option of becoming a human bomb than they would be otherwise.

The leader of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades in Jenin, Zacharia Zubeidi appears to support this view. He reports, “Girls come begging for such operations [human bombings] much more than boys. Twice as many girls ask.” When asked why he thought this was so, he answered, “Emotions of girls are higher than boys. Their feelings are much deeper than boys’. God created girls more sensitive.” However, he added, “We decided no girls. No one took them since the *Intifada* began, so this pool increased. A guy can let a little of what’s inside out by going to shoot on an operation – shoot and come back. A girl has few choices. She cannot go and shoot. Every girl has just one way – a [bombing] operation.”²⁴²

A woman who chooses to become a bomber, taking on the traditionally male role of warrior, does briefly attain a sense of power in life. But this is quite short-lived given the path a suicide bomber takes. Hence, these are likely only secondary

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

motivations following traumatic stress. Likewise, in some societies a woman can attain “celebrity status” only after death; a status that is very difficult for a woman to attain in life in most traditional societies.

3.4 Societal Motives and Public Support

The question that remains to be answered is what explains the extent of societal support for this type of strategy? Why were the organizations able to convince the broader public of the appropriateness of suicide bombings?

The changes in the characteristics of suicide bombers during the second Intifada are not only related to the changes in the organizations’ policies. They also reflect changes in the attitude of the Palestinian society toward suicide bombings. Previous studies have shown that social support had a significant effect on the willingness of individuals to commit suicide attacks during the second Intifada. Clearly, neither suicide bombers nor the organizations sending them out operate in a vacuum, and they are influenced by the social environment and the support of the Palestinian society. Kimhi and Even, (2004) argue that although it is not always possible to make a distinction between the unprompted support of the Palestinian people and the social support directed by the organization, it seems that they are influenced by the environment, which encourages suicide attacks. Social support such as public assemblies, posters of the suicide bombers in the streets, and financial support for the families of suicide bombers has contributed toward

establishing the collective perception of suicide attacks as a legitimate act of national liberation in Palestinian society.²⁴³

The level of public support for suicide operations seems to affect both the group's willingness to use this tactic and the number of volunteers for suicide missions. In choosing tactics and targets, the groups tend to act in accordance with the population's approval. During the last six months of 1995, for example, Hamas refrained from carrying out suicide attacks because its leadership realized that such actions would not be supported by the Palestinian population and would thus have had a negative effect on the organization's popularity. The great increase in the frequency of suicide attacks during the second Intifada reflected the increased willingness of Palestinian youth to be recruited for acts that the community generally regarded as ultimate patriotism and heroism. Songs praising the *shaheeds* were the greatest hits, the walls in the streets and alleys of Palestinian towns in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were covered with graffiti applaud them²⁴⁴.



Graffiti of exploding bus, Dheishah refugee camp

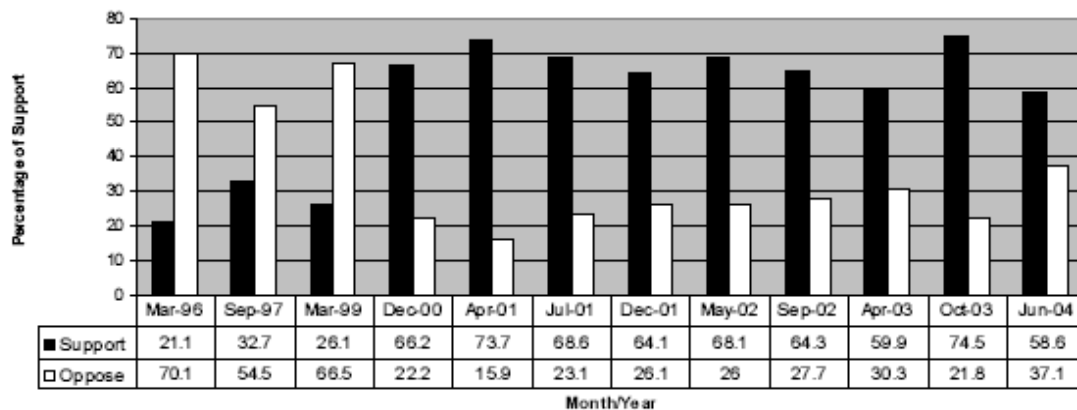
²⁴³ 168 IJCV : Vol. 1 (2) 2007, pp. 160–168; Revital Sela-Shayovitz: Suicide Bombers in Israel: Their Motivations, Characteristics, and Prior Activity in Terrorist Organizations.

²⁴⁴ See Ariel Merari 'Social, Organizational and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism' in Torje Bjorgo (ed.) *The Root Causes of Terrorism*, Proceedings of an Expert Meeting on the Root Causes of Terrorism (9-11 June 2003), Oslo.

In this environment, the groups considered having a public license to continue the suicide attacks, and they also had a constant flow of eager youths ready to become the next heroes.

TABLE 5

Public Support for Suicide Bombings 1996-2004²⁴⁵



The surveys conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC) and Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) showed that many forms of violent action toward Israel have a positive value attached to them in Palestinian areas. They show strong support for military actions against the IDF, Israeli civilians, and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. Over the course of 16 surveys, undertaken between May 1997 and February 2006, JMCC survey data averaged 60.9 percent support for military operations against Israeli targets. The 13 surveys conducted by PCPSR between August 1995 and March 2005 showed 88.1 percent support for any military operation against Israeli military targets. Support for armed attacks against Israeli civilians averaged 51.7 percent over 19 surveys between August 1995 and June 2006 (PCPSR). Support for armed attacks against

²⁴⁵ Hafez, Mohammed; Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study; *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29:165–185, 2006

Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza averaged 86.6 percent over 12 surveys between August 1995 and December 2004 (PCPSR). Support for these acts was consistently higher amongst those who were educated, young, female, living in refugee camps, earning a higher income, and Hamas supporters. Over the course of 19 surveys undertaken between June 1995 and February 2006, JMCC data showed 52 percent support for suicide bombings against any Israeli target. Support for specific suicide bombings in PCPSR surveys showed even higher levels. The Maxim Restaurant bombing in 2003, which killed 20 Israeli civilians, received 74 percent support. The Beer Shiva suicide bombing in 2004 received 77 percent support, while 69 percent supported the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv in April 2006 that killed 11 civilians.

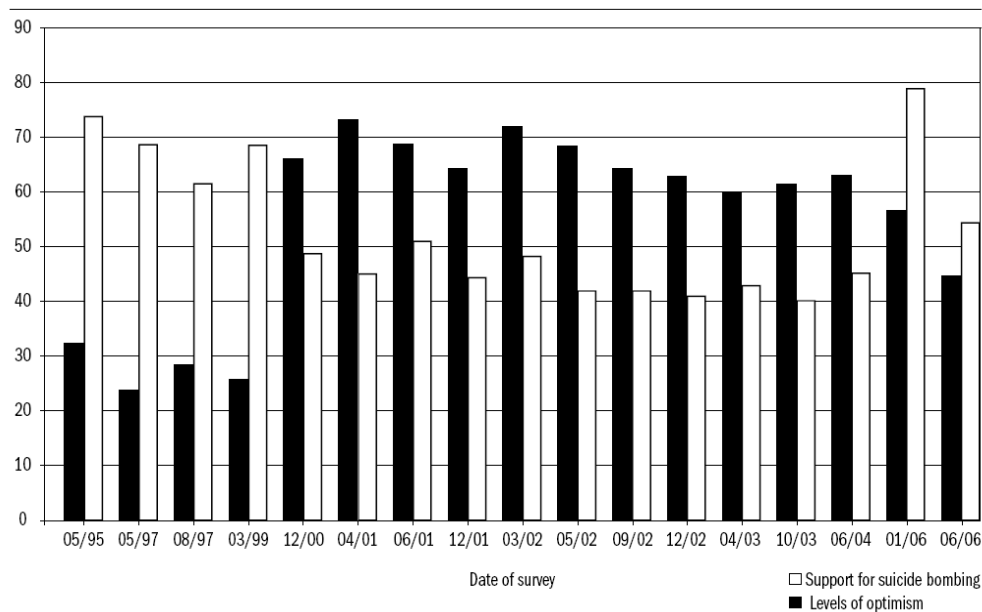
JMCC survey data also revealed a negative correlation between support for suicide bombings and optimism about the future (see Figure 8). This finding corresponds with the hypothesis that anxiety about the future turns individuals toward authoritarian and escalatory tendencies.²⁴⁶ In normative terms, suicide bombings correspond with this escalatory tendency because they violate almost every ethical norm in societies in which it takes place (i.e. not to kill innocents and not to commit suicide). In strategic terms, suicide bombings cause more casualties.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Gill, Paul: A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Suicide Bombing 159 IJCV : Vol. 1 (2) 2007, pp. 142–159.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

Figure 8²⁴⁸

Levels of support for suicide bombings versus optimism levels



Since the first Palestinian suicide bombing in April 1994, despite their use in only 12 percent of incidents suicide bombings have accounted for 78 percent of Israeli deaths through violent actions.²⁴⁹ Seventeen JMCC surveys included both of the following questions: “Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future?” and “Do you support suicide bombings?” When optimists outnumbered pessimists, support for suicide bombings averaged 40 percent. When optimists were in the minority, support averaged 65.6 percent.

Other factors that may also contribute toward increasing or decreasing support for suicide bombings and/or organizations’ use of violent means of resistance include political conditions such as harsh counterterrorism policies, poverty, a sense of relative deprivation and/or the initiation of peace processes. An example of political conditions reducing societal support for suicide bombings occurred in February 2005. Journalists reported that the suicide bombing by Abdallah Badran, a

²⁴⁸ Source: Collated JMCC survey data.

²⁴⁹ Mipt database of terrorism incidents (www.mipt.org).

member of Islamic Jihad, was not celebrated. The suicide attack was the first since the Sharm el-Sheikh summit on February 8, 2005, at which then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas announced a cease-fire. The Palestinian community did not print posters of the new martyr. No celebration was planned for his funeral. One local stated; "Things were getting better and then no sooner do we have money coming in again then it is stopped by this suicide bombing"²⁵⁰. No suicide bombings took place in the following sixteen months. In other words, surrounding political conditions, coupled with a shared sense of threat (or lack thereof) can contribute toward either increasing or decreasing support for suicide bombings.

After having analysed the roots of the conflict and the organizational motivations behind the use of suicide bombings, let us now turn to examining how effective, from a political and strategic point of view, the use of suicide bombings was in terms of helping the Palestinian organizations achieve their stated objectives, both at the local and national level. The next chapter focuses on suicide bombings as a strategy both in the struggle against the Israeli occupation and as a strategy in inter-organizational rivalry.

²⁵⁰ Cited in Urquhart 2005.

4 Suicide Bombings as Strategy in the Struggle Against Israel & Inter-organizational Rivalry

The first suicide mission (car bomb) performed by a Palestinian organization took place on 16 April 1993. On a late Friday afternoon, Sahar Tama Nabulsi, a Hamas operative, drove into the parking lot of a restaurant run by members of the nearby Mechola settlement in the Jordan valley. This restaurant was known as a meeting place for soldiers who regularly dined there before going home on leave or returning to base. The operation marked a dramatic change in the Palestinian struggle.

The reaction of policymakers in Israel to this first Palestinian suicide bombing incident was of great astonishment. This was because until then, the phenomenon of suicide terrorism was mostly limited to Lebanon. However, Hamas had already adopted 'in principle' the idea of using suicide operatives four years before the attack. In its leaflet no. 68, which was distributed after a series of arrests of its top-ranking officials in 1989, Hamas summoned its operatives to begin engaging in suicide missions against Israeli targets.

The question is why did Hamas wait four years from the time of their call for suicide operations in 1989 until the actual implementation? The answer can be found in the same rational approach that generally guides an organization's leadership. In their view, violence is a means and not an end. An organization's decision whether to use violence or not, and which tactic to choose, depends on the expected benefits of the method. Therefore, what did eventually lead Hamas to begin sending suicide bombers in 1993? Despite the fact that research on suicide terrorism in general, and the study of the Palestinian case in particular, is still not

comprehensive, the question of the objectives Hamas had in mind by initiating suicide attacks has led to two polarized academic views.

4.1 Suicide Bombings as a Strategy for Implementing the Oslo Accords?

The first approach holds the view that the aim of Hamas' suicide attacks was to force Israel to fulfill its part of the Oslo Accords, which it signed with the Palestinian Authority in September 1993.²⁵¹ This view is based on the complications that came up when it came to implementing the Accords after the agreement was signed. For example, according to Oslo, Israel was supposed to withdraw from Gaza and Jericho between 13 December 1993 and 13 April 1994, but did not comply with this timetable. Also, Israel and the Palestinian Authority disagreed on the size of the Palestinian police force that was to be stationed in the cities that Israel evacuated. They also were in dispute on Israel's right to pursue 'terror suspects' in these territories. When talks on these issues reached a deadlock, Hamas conducted two suicide attacks within a week of each other. The first was on 6 April and the second on 13 April 1994. Several days later, on 18 April, the Knesset approved the decision to withdraw its forces after Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Prime Minister at the time, maintained that the only way to cope with the great losses inflicted by suicide bombings was to withdraw from Palestinian territories.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Pedahzur, Ami; 'Suicide Terrorism' (Polity Press, 2005)

²⁵² On April 18, 1994, Rabin gave a major speech in the Knesset explaining why the withdrawal was necessary: "Members of the Knesset: I want to tell the truth. For 27 years we have been dominating another people against its will. For 27 years Palestinians in the territories get up in the morning harboring a fierce hatred for us, as Israelis and Jews. Each morning they get up to a hard life, for which we are also, but not solely responsible. We cannot deny that our continuing control over a foreign people who do not want us exacts a painful price... There is no end to the targets Hamas and other terrorist organizations have among us. Each Israeli, ...each bus, each

According to this approach, Israel thus gave in to Hamas' suicide bombing tactic. Withdrawal began on 4 May 1994. Even though the result apparently came unexpected for Hamas leaders, considering the circumstances and the assessments expressed by Rabin (see footnote 252) and others, it would have been reasonable for them to conclude that suicide attacks had accelerated Israeli withdrawal. And they did come to this conclusion. Hamas leader Ahmed Bakr (1995) said that "what forced the Israelis to withdraw from Gaza was the Intifada and not the Oslo agreement."²⁵³ Another Hamas leader, Imad al-Faluji (1995) judged that

"all that has been achieved so far is the consequence of our military actions. Without the so-called peace process, we would have gotten even more. . . . We would have gotten Gaza and the West Bank without this agreement. . . . Israel can beat all Arab Armies. However, it can do nothing against a youth with a knife or an explosive charge on his body. Since it was unable to guarantee security within its borders, Israel entered into negotiations with the PLO. . . . If the Israelis want security, they will have to abandon their settlements . . . in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem."²⁵⁴

Furthermore, these events seem to have persuaded other organizations' leaders that future suicide attacks could eventually lead to still greater concessions. Fathi al-Shaqaqi (1995), leader of Islamic Jihad, said,

"Our jihad action has exposed the enemy weakness, confusion, and hysteria. It has become clear that the enemy can be defeated, for if a small faithful group was able to instil all this horror and panic in the enemy through confronting it in Palestine and southern Lebanon, what will happen when the nation confronts it with all its potential. . . . Martyrdom actions will escalate in the face of all pressures. . . [they] are a realistic option in confronting the unequal

home, is a target for their murderous plans. Since there is no separation between the two populations, the current situation creates endless possibilities for Hamas and the other organizations.

²⁵³ Quoted in David C Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, 2006, p. 166

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

balance of power. If we are unable to effect a balance of power now, we can achieve a balance of horror.”²⁵⁵

Confirmation of this approach, which posits that suicide attacks were used to force Israel to implement its part of the agreements, came with the next wave of suicide attacks near the end of 1994 and early 1995. This time, the suicide attacks were perpetrated in response to the delays in the implementation of the second stage of the agreements. Israel was supposed to withdraw from highly populated areas in the West Bank. Between October 1994 and April 1995, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad conducted seven suicide attacks. The attacks stopped only after the Palestinian Authority requested Hamas and Islamic Jihad to stop their operations.²⁵⁶ As a consequence of these events, Israel set 1 July 1995 as a target date for withdrawal. But once again, delays on the part of Israel, supposedly to build bypass roads for Israeli vehicles in order to avoid evacuated territories, led to renewed suicide attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. On 24 July and 21 August 1995, two suicide attacks took the lives of eleven Israelis. Less than two months later, Israel agreed to pull back from West Bank cities even before the construction of bypass roads, which it had previously insisted upon. The withdrawal began on December 12, 1995. As in 1994, Hamas and Islamic Jihad came to the conclusion that their suicide bombings had been effective. Hamas' spokesman in Jordan, Muhammad Nazzal, explained that new attacks were necessary to change Israel's behavior: "Hamas needs military muscle in order to negotiate with Israel from a position of strength. Arafat started from a position of weakness, which is how the Israelis managed to push on him the solution and get recognition of their state and settlements without getting

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Pape, 'The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism', p. 353

anything in return.”²⁵⁷ After the agreement was signed, Hamas leaders also argued that suicide operations contributed to Israel’s withdrawal. Mahmud al-Zahhar (1996), a spokesman for Hamas, said,

“The Authority told us that military action embarrasses the PA because it obstructs the redeployment of the Israeli’s forces and implementation of the agreement. . . . We offered many martyrs to attain freedom. . . . Any fair person knows that the military action was useful for the Authority during negotiations.”²⁵⁸

The organization’s leaders also stressed that stopping the attacks only discouraged Israel from withdrawing. An early August Hamas communiqué (No. 125, 1995) read,

“They said that the strugglers’ operations have been the cause of the delay in widening the autonomous rule in the West Bank, and that they have been the reason for the deterioration of the living and economic conditions of our people. Now the days have come to debunk their false claims . . . and to affirm that July 1 [a promised date for IDF withdrawal] was no more than yet another of the “unholy” Zionist dates. . . . Hamas has shown an utmost degree of self-restraint throughout the past period. . . . but matters have gone far enough and the criminals will reap what their hands have sown.”²⁵⁹

The first approach appears to be a good explanation for the suicide attacks. Yet its basic assumption that the goals of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad were the same as those of the Palestine Authority, who sought to accelerate the implementation of the Oslo Accords, are flawed. The reason is that this approach does not take into consideration the deep-rooted rivalry between Hamas and the PIJ on the one hand, and the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority on the other. So the idea of this type of cooperation between the organizations at that time is not quite

²⁵⁷ Theodoulou 1995

²⁵⁸ Quoted in David C Rapoport, *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, 2006, p. 167

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 168

convincing. The organizations also did not agree on the terms of the Oslo Accords. In fact, some even believed it was a sell out.²⁶⁰

The second approach analyzing the Palestinian organizations' use of suicide bombings does account for this rivalry. It also takes into consideration the influence of internal political considerations on taking up the suicide bombing strategy. The Palestinian case is not simply a struggle against an occupying force; it is also an internal struggle for power and dominance among rivals. The West Bank and Gaza Strip had been occupied by Israel for nearly thirty years before the first Palestinian suicide bombing. Why did it take so long? Robert Pape argues that frustration with Oslo and settlement expansion caused the tipping point. Actually, Palestinian suicide bombings also coincided with an intensified struggle for political dominance among the Palestinian factions, specifically between Hamas and Arafat's PLO²⁶¹. Since suicide bombings have had obviously negative results, such as the loss of international sympathy and the construction of Israel's security wall, this suggests that although the Israeli occupation may have been the fuel of the suicide campaign, ending the occupation was not the primary objective. The attacks were also used by the groups to win converts and supporters as well as to build identity over time.

4.2 Suicide Bombings and Inter-organizational Rivalry

The first approach argued that the aim of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in using suicide bombings was to speed up the implementation of the Oslo Accords. In contrast, the second approach argues that their aim was to sabotage the Accords and weaken the Palestinian Authority. The Oslo Accords were problematic

²⁶⁰ Pedahzur, p- 58

²⁶¹ The Washington Institute, Policy Watch #1050: Special Forum Report, 'Suicide Terrorism in the Middle East: Origins and Response'

for Hamas and the PIJ for two reasons. First, the Accords meant an end to their vision of the establishment of an Islamic state on all of historic Palestine. Second, the Accords granted a more dominant role to Fatah in the institutions of the Palestinian Authority and excluded Islamic organizations from making and implementing policies in the PA even though they enjoyed widespread popular support already at that time.²⁶²

When the religious Hamas movement was established in late 1987, it was clear that there would be tensions between it and the more national political Fatah party, and more differences than common grounds. Although both Hamas and Fatah agreed on the importance of 'armed struggle' to achieve Palestinian aspirations, Fatah mainly had national aspirations whereas Hamas' ideology integrated both national and religious elements. Hamas wanted to liberate all of Palestine as well as 'Israel proper'. Fatah wanted Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to establish a Palestinian state in these territories with (East) Jerusalem as its capital.

Opposing ideologies were not the only disagreements among the two groups. The Hamas leadership felt that Fatah's increasing legitimacy was endangering the political viability of Islamic movements in the West Bank and Gaza. The organizations were threatened by this new reality and so their leadership decided to fight against it. In the beginning, Hamas had two main advantages over Fatah. First, before the Oslo Accords were signed, many of Fatah's leadership were in exile in Tunisia and other Arab countries. The Hamas leadership, on the other hand, operated from its central base in Gaza. Second, together with the rhetoric used against Israel in order to rally the Palestinian masses, Hamas relied on the traditions

²⁶² Ibid, p. 59

of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah. They founded a network of welfare institutions that granted aid to the poor Palestinian populace. Yasser Arafat understood the threatening potential of Hamas early on and began to work against it. Hamas responded by increasing its military actions against Israeli targets, which earned the organization even more public support.

Both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad agreed that suicide attacks would destroy Israeli hopes that the Accords would put an end to terrorism and gain security for Israel. The Israeli public's diminishing support for the agreements was meant to put a stop to their implementation. They were also meant to undermine Fatah's status as perceived by both the Israeli leadership and the Palestinian public. Three suicide attacks conducted by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad against Israeli targets did not further their goals, nor did they lead to the collapse of the Oslo process. However, their suicide campaign that began in February 1996 did have significant results. Hamas declared that the four attacks carried out by the organization in the cities of Jerusalem, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv in February and March 1996 were in retaliation for the assassination of Yehiya Ayash ('the Engineer'), the mastermind behind developing the organization's method of suicide attack. Ayash had been assassinated by Israel not long before. However, generally the leaderships of organizations do not engage in acts of revenge. Reprisals for actions perpetrated against them are mainly dictated by their goals²⁶³. In the case of this campaign of suicide attacks, Hamas had two goals. First, it wanted to show Israel that killing the person most responsible for sending out suicide attackers would not put an end to the suicide attacks. And second, Hamas wanted to halt the progress of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

²⁶³ Pedahzur, p. 60

To achieve these goals, Hamas hoped Binyamin Netanyahu, then leader of the right-wing Likud Party, would be elected in the elections scheduled for May 1996. In contrast to Shimon Peres, Prime Minister at the time, who was committed to the Oslo process, Netanyahu was quite open about his hawkish attitude towards the peace process and expressed his reservations about his willingness to implement the agreements in the future.

If these were the two goals Hamas set out for itself, then it would appear that it had accomplished them. Even after the death of Ayash, the organisation was able to conduct highly lethal suicide actions that claimed many lives. In this manner it demonstrated to Israel that its capabilities were still intact. Moreover, Netanyahu won the elections. He managed to defeat his Labor opponent (Peres) just six months after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, leader of the Labor Party. As surveys at that time indicated, Rabin's murder, which stunned Israeli society, was supposed to have been converted into sweeping support for the Labor party²⁶⁴. However, the suicide attacks led to decreasing support for the Labor Party. The gap between the Labor and Likud Party gradually diminished until on election day, Netanyahu defeated Peres by a small margin.

Hamas and the PIJ won a victory in another sense. Suicide actions perpetrated in those years responded to the general feelings of the Palestinian people. A survey conducted in February 1995, shortly after the double suicide attack by the PIJ at a roadside bus stop for soldiers at Beit-Lid, showed that 46 percent of Palestinians supported continuing with the suicide attacks against Israeli targets. Only 34 percent were opposed. Hence, in terms of internal Palestinian policy, the

²⁶⁴ Pedahzur, p. 61

suicide attacks proved to be an important political tool.²⁶⁵ Islamic organizations appeared more determined and daring than Fatah, which led to higher support rates for them.

4.2.1 Hamas vs. Fatah

Fatah and Hamas have a long history of trying to destabilize one another. Interfactional rivalry between Hamas and Fatah began with the first Intifada on December 8, 1987. This first uprising against Israel's occupation was initially led by a number of Palestinian political factions. Yasser Arafat's Fatah organization brought these factions together under its control, creating the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU). In January 1988, within just two months of the Intifada, Fatah and the UNLU faced their greatest challenge. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood founded an umbrella organization called *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya* (Movement of the Islamic Resistance), which forms the Arabic acronym HAMAS (meaning "zeal" in Arabic). The younger members of the Muslim Brotherhood confronted the more pragmatic leadership of the movement, claiming that they had an obligation to wage jihad against Israel. Hamas then began to challenge Fatah, which they perceived as trying to "dominate control of the uprising."²⁶⁶ During the Intifada, both organizations competed for public support by distributing leaflets with contradictory messages about ideology, demonstrations, and civil strikes. In this way, Fatah and Hamas both wanted to claim being the guiding force behind the uprising.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Michel Jubran and Laura Drake, "The Islamic Fundamentalist Movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," *Middle East Policy*, Spring 1993, p. 6.

Arafat, on the other hand, used the first Intifada to reinforce his status as an international leader of the Palestinian people. For example in 1988 he did this by accepting the UN General Assembly resolution 181, which called for a partition of Palestine into two states - one Jewish and one Arab. Acceptance of this resolution amounted to an implicit recognition of Israel.²⁶⁷ Israel and the international community saw this as an opportunity for peace talks and began working towards that end. Arafat responded by urging a peace conference based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which called for Israel to withdraw from the territories it had conquered in 1967. Two weeks later, at least fifty-five states had recognized Palestine's independence,²⁶⁸ thus making the PLO—and by default Fatah—"an instant, makeshift government."²⁶⁹

It was now apparent that Hamas and Fatah had competing strategies. Fatah wanted to create an independent state to be recognized by the international community. Its strategy was to demonstrate its pragmatism to the world. Hamas wanted to gain political ground through an unwavering rejection of all negotiations leading to a two-state solution. The result was that Arafat and Fatah now had a stronger status at the international level, but had lost credibility among the Palestinians, because the latter considered Fatah's implicit recognition of Israel as a sign of weakness. Furthermore, some Palestinians interpreted Arafat and Fatah's failure to drive out Israel from any part of the occupied territories through armed struggle as a sign of their weakness and of their secular and nationalist ideology.²⁷⁰ Thus, political scientist Mark Tessler notes, "Hamas extended its influence in both

²⁶⁷ Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 721.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 722

²⁶⁹ Jonathan Schanzer, 'The Challenge of Hamas to Fatah', *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2003.

²⁷⁰ Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 695.

the West Bank and Gaza during 1988 and became an important voice giving direction to the uprising, second only to that of the UNLU."²⁷¹

By the end of 1988, some analysts believed that Hamas was about to overtake Fatah and the PLO as the leading power in the occupied territories. As political scientist Glenn Robinson noted, "Certain events contributed to the perception that Hamas had emerged—or was on the verge of emerging—as the dominant factor in the occupied territories. ... leading one commentator to suggest that 'if really free elections were held in the [occupied] territories, the fundamentalists would win more seats than the PLO.'"²⁷²

Hamas' ideology, a combination of asceticism and nationalism, clearly spoke to an increasing number of Palestinians.²⁷³ As its popularity increased, Hamas pressured women to dress modestly, attacked stores selling liquor, clashed with leftists and killed collaborators suspected of working with Israel. Hamas also increasingly attempted to delegitimize Fatah. In January 1989, Hamas and the PFLP jointly published a leaflet calling for an alternative to the PLO's leadership of the UNLU.²⁷⁴ Later that year, Hamas' rising popularity and violence prompted Israel to arrest hundreds of its activists and militants and declare Hamas an illegal organization. According to Israeli political scientists Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, the arrests created a "vacuum that opened in the senior- and middle-level leadership."²⁷⁵ As a result, Hamas restructured its leadership so that Israel's measures of arrests and assassinations would not completely incapacitate the

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Glenn E. Robinson, *Building a Palestinian State: The Incomplete Revolution* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 169.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 170.

²⁷⁴ Anat Kurz and Nahman Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle* (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1997), memorandum no. 48, p. 28.

²⁷⁵ Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 160.

organization. Israeli terrorism expert Boaz Ganor also confirms that "the institutionalizing stage came in 1989, during which the movement worked on strengthening its infrastructure while establishing low-level ranks of command on the regional level."²⁷⁶

Hamas' clashes with the IDF only improved its standing among the Palestinian people. Israeli journalists Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari note that " Hamas had become a factor to be reckoned with. ... It had built an impressive infrastructure and held the power to ease or impede progress toward a political solution."²⁷⁷ This became evident in 1990 when Hamas and the PLO leadership, at the request of Yasser Arafat himself, met in Amman, Jordan, to invite Hamas to join the Palestinian National Council (PNC).²⁷⁸

In 1991, the competing strategies of Fatah and Hamas came to a climax. Arafat attempted to consolidate his position as the international leader of the Palestinians and authorized a delegation to join the Jordanian delegation to the Madrid Conference.²⁷⁹ Hamas vigorously attacked this as a "conference of selling the land."²⁸⁰ That year, Hamas formed its military wing, the 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades (named after a famous Islamist killed by the British in 1935), whose lethal attacks both against Israel and other Palestinian factions brought Hamas increased popularity.²⁸¹

International support had clearly helped Fatah gain power in the late 1980s. But violent resistance was proving to be a successful strategy at home. Hamas'

²⁷⁶ Boaz Ganor, "Hamas—The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Territories," *Survey of Arab Affairs*, Feb. 2, 1992, p. 5.

²⁷⁷ Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising—Israel's Third Front* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), p. 239.

²⁷⁸ Kurz and Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, p. 29.

²⁷⁹ The Madrid Conference was an attempt by the international community to start a peace process through negotiations with Israel, the Palestinians as well as Arab countries including Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

²⁸⁰ Kurz and Tal, *Hamas: Radical Islam in a National Struggle*, p. 30.

²⁸¹ "Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)," at http://www.ict.org.il/inter_ter/orgdet.cfm?orgid=13#history.

increasing popularity in the Palestinian territories was proof of that. Fatah now faced a dilemma. It could try to gain international support by renouncing violence, or it could take up Hamas' strategy and gain Palestinian support through violence. Arafat, until then, had made no choice. He had called for both "martyrdom"²⁸² and a "just peace" with Israel.²⁸³ The result was that without a clear line by the leadership, the Palestinians were in complete disarray. In fact, they were the farthest they had ever been from achieving statehood, even when the violence began.

At the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000, Arafat released a number of Hamas detainees and even cooperated with Hamas on military operations. Fatah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad formed a coalition (named the "National and Islamic Forces") in order to coordinate between the groups.²⁸⁴ But Hamas soon stepped up its operations and emerged as a threatening opposition once again. One media report noted that there were "concerns among senior PA officials over the possibility that Hamas [was] trying to reap political capital among traditionally-minded Palestinians."²⁸⁵ In an attempt to secure his power, Arafat reportedly offered Hamas an alliance in January 2001, which Hamas again refused.²⁸⁶ In June 2001, Hamas also turned down Arafat's offer to join a new Palestinian cabinet.²⁸⁷

A poll conducted among Palestinians in August 2001 showed that Fatah's popularity in the PA had decreased sharply to 26 percent, whereas for the first time a higher percentage (27 percent) supported Hamas.²⁸⁸ Inter-factional tensions and

²⁸² "President Arafat: We Will Be Steadfast on Our Soil until We Triumph or Martyr," Wafa (Palestine News Agency), Apr. 3, 2002.

²⁸³ "President Arafat and PA Leadership Condemn All Terrorist Acts against Civilians," Wafa, Apr. 13, 2002.

²⁸⁴ David Schenker, "Palestinian Fictions—Yasser Arafat Stands Alone as the Undisputed Leader of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinians," *World and I*, Nov. 2001, p. 26.

²⁸⁵ *Ha'aretz* (English), Oct. 15, 2000.

²⁸⁶ *The Middle East Newslite*, Jan. 11, 2002.

²⁸⁷ Associated Press (AP), June 3, 2002.

²⁸⁸ *The Middle East Newslite*, Aug. 28, 2002.

violence followed. In October, when a Hamas operative killed Col. Rajah Abu Liyah of PA security, the clashes that followed led the PA security to move against Hamas in Gaza, and declare an emergency.²⁸⁹

Why did Hamas refuse to merge with Fatah and become the counterpart to Israel's "national unity" government? According to documents the IDF seized in Gaza in 2002, Hamas took advantage of Fatah's weakness. Its confidence had grown to the point where it saw itself as one of "the influential forces in the Arab-Zionist equation."²⁹⁰ In these documents, Hamas observed that the PA had "collapsed, its infrastructure has been destroyed, and it suffers rifts and divisions ... in short, the PA has been dismantled and must be reassembled according to new conditions."²⁹¹ Hamas was convinced that these "new conditions" would legitimately give it a dominant role in any new order, and that it would gain nothing by legitimizing the PA.

It seems Hamas also realized that its suicide campaigns not only demoralized Israel but also destabilized the PA. Every Hamas attack on an Israeli target brought forth an Israeli reprisal, namely against the PA. Israel not only conducted "targeted killings" and mass arrests of Hamas operatives, it also often struck at PA infrastructure (e.g., police stations, government buildings, Arafat's compound in Ramallah). On the whole, Israeli retaliatory actions actually weakened the PA (and its Fatah offshoot) more than Hamas ever did.²⁹² Perhaps this was also Hamas' intention.

²⁸⁹ *Ha'aretz*, Oct. 11, 2002.

²⁹⁰ "The Hamas perceived the dialogue with the Palestinian Authority which was held in Egypt as a means to tighten its relations with Egypt and deepen the PA's support for Hamas terrorist activities." Israel Defence Forces/Military Intelligence, document seized in Gaza, Dec. 2002, Document #TR3-874-02, p. 6.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

Hamas was thus able to kill two birds with one stone. By attacking Israel, it increased its popularity among the Palestinians, and it drew an Israeli retaliation that damaged the PA and also set the course for Fatah's disintegration. Given these added 'benefits' for the suicide attacks, Hamas had no reason to stop them.²⁹³

Public opinion and support of suicide bombings also played an important role. Towards the end of the 1990s, after a short decline in public support for suicide attacks, there was a clear change in the Palestinians' opinion of using suicide attacks. A survey conducted in 1998 among Palestinians showed that, for the first time, support of attacks against Israeli targets had risen to 50 per cent. This shift in public opinion became evident when the Al-Aqsa Intifada began two years later in late September 2000. When the second Intifada erupted, the number of suicide attacks increased dramatically. And at the forefront of these actions stood Hamas. Khaled Mishal, chief of the organization's political bureau, explained that whereas the first Intifada had had a more popular nature and was mainly characterized by demonstrations, it was now time to resort to an "organized mobilization of military hardware and suicide bombers", the standard of reference being the Lebanese model of armed resistance²⁹⁴. According to Mishal, the imbalance of power between Israel and the Palestinians would prevent Hamas from being victorious over Israel. Therefore, acts of resistance (and particularly suicide attacks) would give Hamas more advantages due to its endurance and the determination of the public it represented. At that time (2000), more than 60 percent of the Palestinian population

²⁹³ *Ha'aretz* (English), Jan. 30, 2003.

²⁹⁴ Pedahzur, p. 62

was in favor of continuing violent attacks on Israel, and 63 percent believed that Palestinian resistance organizations should copy Hezbollah's methods.²⁹⁵

Without a doubt, the suicide attacks conducted by Hamas shortly after the Al-Aqsa Intifada began significantly affected the agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The suicide attacks destroyed any hope the Israeli public may have had regarding the peace process. The result was that Ariel Sharon, then head of the Likud party and a blatant opponent of the peace process, was elected Prime Minister of Israel in February 2001 with a sweeping majority unparalleled in Israeli politics.

Indeed, the Palestinian organizations thus accomplished two aims. First, they were able to bring about the definitive collapse of the Oslo Accords, and they created a strategic balance of terror with Israel although its power was far greater than theirs. And second, for the first time these organizations were also able to influence the political agenda of Palestinian public opinion. The broad support for suicide attacks among the Palestinian public, as well as the increase in support for Hamas, also affected the other Palestinian organizations. The fear of losing their own public standing created a sense of pressure which led them to change their strategies. Soon, organizations that in the past had condemned the idea of suicide bombers – including leftist factions such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – began to send out suicide bombers as well.²⁹⁶

However, the height of these developments was Fatah's decision to take up suicide attacks. For Fatah, this was indeed a revolution.²⁹⁷ Many of Fatah's

²⁹⁵ 'Camp David Summit, Chances for Reconciliation and Lasting Peace, Violence and Confrontations, Hierarchies of Priorities, and Domestic Politics,' CPRS Polls, Public Opinion Poll #1, 27-29 July 2000, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2000/pla.html#violence>

²⁹⁶ In a survey conducted shortly after the PFLP began conducting suicide attacks, rates of support for the organization had returned to their original levels. Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, ch. 4.

²⁹⁷ Bloom, 'Palestinian Suicide Bombing'.

members had served in the Palestinian Authority's security forces and before the second Intifada began had renounced any involvement in suicide actions. In fact, many of them had been in charge of preventing precisely these kinds of actions. During the first weeks of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Fatah limited itself to smaller violent actions, but these were lost in the mayhem caused by the suicide attacks executed by Hamas and Islamic Jihad.²⁹⁸

A survey conducted in July 2001 showed that Palestinian approval for attacks against civilians inside Israel had risen to 58 percent. Seventy percent felt that attacks on Israel, and not the pursuit of a political process, were more likely to advance Palestinian goals. The survey also showed an additional important finding which explains why Fatah chose to join the path of suicide violence. While Arafat's and Fatah's popularity had declined sharply between July 2000 and July 2001, support for Islamic organizations had risen in almost identical proportion.²⁹⁹

Fatah's leadership could not ignore these developments. As events during the Intifada escalated, Fatah founded the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.³⁰⁰ The goal of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which relied on the Tanzim infrastructure – a network of local organizations uniting the younger members of Fatah among them, was to serve as a counterweight to the suicide brigades of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad: the Izz-a-Din al Kassam brigades and the Al-Quds Brigades. The new Fatah suicide squads were authorized by the leaders of Fatah and the Palestinian Authority³⁰¹. On 18 February 2002, Fatah carried out its first suicide attack. In the following months,

²⁹⁸ Pedahzur, p. 63

²⁹⁹ While Arafat's popularity dropped from 46 to 33 percent and Fatah's from 37 to 29 per cent, support for Islamic organizations increased from 17 to 27 percent. These figures are taken from 'The Mitchell Report, Cease Fire, and Return to Negotiations; Intifada and Armed Confrontations; Chances for Reconciliation; and, Internal Palestinian Conditions', CPRS Polls, Public Opinion Poll #2, 5-9 July 2001. <http://www.pcprs.org/survey/polls/2001/p2a.html>.

³⁰⁰ Ronen Bergman, *Authority Given*, Tel Aviv: Miskal-Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books, 2002 (Hebrew), quoted in Pedahzur, p. 68

³⁰¹ IDF spokesperson 'Documents: The Palestinian Authority Employs Fatah Activists Involved in Terrorism and Suicide Attacks', Kokhaviv Publications, 23 April 2002

the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades became the most active group in executing suicide attacks. The number of suicide operations conducted by Fatah at the time even surpassed those of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and almost reached the number of attacks conducted by Hamas.³⁰²

Figure 9³⁰³

Number of Palestinian Attacks by Bomber's Organizational Affiliation, 1993-2006

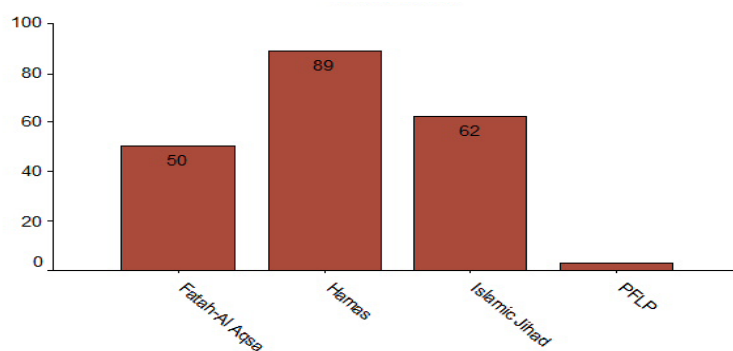
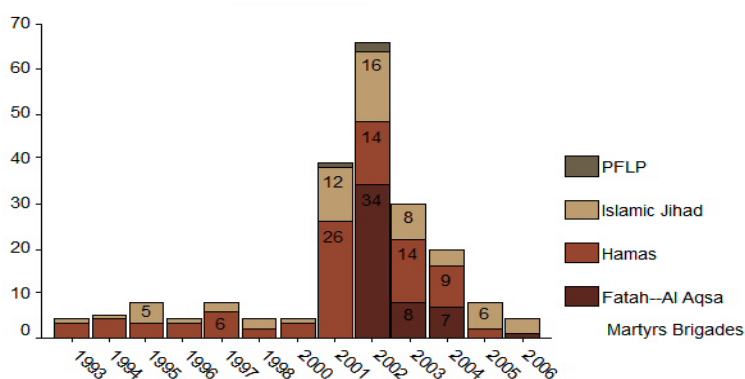


Figure 10³⁰⁴

Yearly Number of Palestinian Suicide Attacks by Sponsoring Organization, 1993-2006



³⁰² Ronen Bergman, *Authority Given*; Bloom, 'Palestinian Suicide Bombing'.

³⁰³ Pedahzur, Ami, and Arie Perliger. 2006. The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective. *Social Forces* 84 (4): 1987–2008; http://www.laits.utexas.edu/tiger/terrorism_data/palestinian_suicide_attacks/total_annual_casualties_199320.html

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

In the summer of 2002, Israel defined suicide terrorism as a 'first-degree strategic threat' and began to deal with it more intensely. Among other things, it increased the number of 'targeted assassinations', reoccupied most of the Palestinian territories and stepped up the erection of the separation wall that was to divide the territories of the Palestinian Authority from 'Israel proper'. These measures made it very difficult for the Palestinian organizations to conduct suicide attacks within Israel itself.

At this point, Hezbollah's involvement in the Palestinian arena became apparent. The reasoning that led the Hezbollah leadership to abandon suicide attacks when Israel withdrew to the 'security zone' in southern Lebanon in 1985 was also evident in the actions of Palestinian groups affiliated with the organization.³⁰⁵ Although they had not given up dispatching suicide bombers, the organizations also conducted other types of attacks. One method was to launch more Qassam rockets from the Gaza Strip to surrounding Israeli settlements. Another was to adopt guerrilla warfare tactics inside the Palestinian territories themselves. One such attack was the remote-controlled explosion of two IDF armored personnel carriers in Gaza on 11 and 12 May 2004. The shift to this type of warfare points towards the strategic logic behind the actions of Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations and their ability to adjust their tactics to changing circumstances.³⁰⁶ The Hamas leadership did not change its principles entirely, but an approach emerged within Hamas that did not entirely rule out dialogue with Israel. Rather it outlined the conditions (both political and territorial) that would allow such a dialogue to take place.

³⁰⁵ Pedahzur, p. 65

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

4.2.1.1 Assessment of the Armed Struggle Against Israel

At this point, it is necessary to examine whether any real progress was made for the Palestinian struggle in general. Did any of the Palestinian factions achieve their goals? The answer is not so obvious. The erection of the wall and Israel's reoccupation of extensive Palestinian territories made the lives of many Palestinians unbearable and led to serious doubts regarding the accomplishments of the armed struggle. The persistence of an Israeli military presence in Palestinian territories makes it difficult to improve the quality of life of the population in the area and perpetuates the sources of conflict.

An attempt to assess which one of the various organizations benefited the most from the use of suicide bombings to influence political processes reveals Hamas as the winner and Fatah as the loser. Nonetheless, the Palestinian case is rather complex. Hamas successfully damaged the Oslo Accords process and tipped the scales of Israeli public opinion in favor of withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza during the Al-Aqsa Intifada. It forced Israel to decide to pullout of Palestinian territories that were not part of the peace agreements. Moreover, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad gained significant status in the Palestinian political arena and had to be accounted for in any future division of political power.

At the same time, Israel's 'war on terror' and its policy of 'targeted assassinations' landed a strong blow to Hamas' leadership. Hamas was left in the position of a strong popular movement aspiring for authority over some of the areas to be evacuated by Israel. But, at the same time, the backbone of its senior leadership had been eliminated. Putting in place a new generation of leaders would take a long time. Furthermore, Israel's effective foiling policy forced Hamas and

Islamic Jihad to reduce their suicide bombing campaigns, rather than any other factor.

A final word about Fatah: it is more apparent now that this organization was drawn into the use of suicide bombing. In the case of Fatah, this tactic was not used to promote strategic or political interest but was a means of political survival. In effect, Fatah's use of suicide attacks during the Al-Aqsa Intifada was the 'last nail in the coffin' of the Oslo Accords. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the main accomplishments the Palestinian suicide bombings brought about will be attributed in the future to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad rather than Fatah. Fatah's role in this context will probably be made light of. As for internal Palestinian politics, Fatah's use of suicide bombings did not help the organization protect or resume its former higher political standing. Over the years, the image of the Palestinian Authority gradually wore away in the Palestinian public's eye due to its failures and corruption. If the public remains loyal to the PA, it will be due more to its long-lasting commitment to this institution as the flag-bearer of Palestinian liberation rather than due to its use of suicide bombers.

In the next chapter I will discuss in more detail in how far Israel's counterterrorism measures affected the strategic use of suicide bombings by the various Palestinian organizations. What effect did Israel's tactics have on the Palestinian groups' motivation and capabilities to carry out suicide attacks?

5 Israel's Counterterrorism Measures & Their Effects

Do counterterrorism tactics really lead to an endless cycle of conflict and violence? Mia Bloom argues that Israel's counterterrorism methods both provoked the Palestinian factions to increase their attacks against Israeli targets and increased the public support they received: "Surprisingly enough, Israelis rallied around the extreme right, thinking that hawkish policies would deter future attacks. In fact, the long-term ramifications on the Palestinian polity will encourage rather than deter future attacks."³⁰⁷ Bloom also criticized Israel's offensive measures to deter Palestinian violence: "The Israelis and Palestinians appear to be in a dead-locked battle of assassination-suicide bombing-assassination-suicide bombing in an unending causal loop... encouraging yet more 'martyrs.'"³⁰⁸ She concludes, "...in the long run, the number of attacks will increase because groups vying to lead the Palestinians will use violence as their main source of recruitment and mobilization."³⁰⁹

Bloom was not the only scholar to focus on the individual motivations of the Palestinians as being the crucial element in explaining the intensity of violence and in doubting the effectiveness of Israel's counterterrorist actions. According to Scott Atran, "repeated suicide actions show that massive counterforce alone does not diminish the frequency or intensity of suicide attacks."³¹⁰ Even Richard Boucher, then State Department spokesperson under the hawkish Bush administration, doubted

³⁰⁷ Mia M. Bloom, 'Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding', *Political Science Quarterly* 119/1 (Spring 2004) 80.

³⁰⁸ Bloom, 'Palestinian Suicide Bombing', 84.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 87.

³¹⁰ Scott Atran, 'Mishandling Suicide Terrorism', *Washington Quarterly* 27/3 (Summer 2004) 67.

the effectiveness of Israel's actions against the Palestinian factions, primarily targeted killings, when he stated in July 2001 that "Israel needs to understand that targeted killings of Palestinians don't end the violence, but are only inflaming an already volatile situation and making it much harder to restore calm."³¹¹

If, as Bloom and others predicted, counterterrorism really does breed more violence because it increases motivation amongst the Palestinians, why then did the suicide attacks decline from their peak in 2003-2004 by over one-third (from 184 to 119 attempts).³¹² Moreover, why did successful suicide operations decrease by more than 40 percent (from 26 to 15)?³¹³ I share Frisch's view (2006) that it is not the individuals' motivation that counts militarily or politically, but rather their organization's capabilities. These are largely determined by their opponent's counterterrorism actions. This can be seen in three main elements in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

- 1) Palestinian violence declined dramatically since its peak in 2002.
- 2) None of the explanations identifying motivation as the main cause of the intensity and efficiency of the Palestinian resistance - relative deprivation, vengeance, outbidding or motivation to spoil a peace process – sufficiently explain the decline in both the intensity and efficiency of Palestinian violence.
- 3) A reduction of Palestinian capabilities was at stake, and this reduction in these capabilities was directly linked to successful Israeli counterterrorism.³¹⁴

Even if Israel's offensive actions, such as the assassinations of the two Hamas leaders Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and his successor Abd al-Aziz al- Rantisi in March

³¹¹ Richard Boucher, State Department briefing, 2 July 2001, available at <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2001/4656.htm>> quoted in Gal Luft, 'The Logic of Israel's Targeted Killing', *Middle East Quarterly*, 10/1 (Winter 2003) 4.

³¹² Hillel Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities? Israeli Counterterrorism against Palestinian Suicide Bombings and Violence", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, October 2006, Volume 29, Number 5.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Frisch, p.2

and April 2004, increased the desire to engage in violent reprisal attacks, Hamas and the other factions targeted by Israel were forced to operate at a reduced level of efficiency. Eventually they had to accept the lull in fighting in March 2005, which supports the argument that the organizational capabilities are far more important than motivation, and that these capabilities are largely determined by Israel's successful counterterrorism measures.³¹⁵ This chapter will look at how Israeli counterterrorism measures affected the Palestinian organizations' capabilities in carrying out their attacks, and will analyze the trends of the Palestinian resistance and its efficiency both in terms of the losses the organizations suffered and the damage caused to the Israeli side.

5.1 How Israel's Countermeasures Affected the Organizational Capabilities of the Palestinian Resistance Groups

After the killing of the two Hamas leaders in April 2004, a Hamas official promised, "Our revenge will come a hundredfold for the blood of Rantisi and Yassin!"³¹⁶ Vengeance was a major rhetorical and propaganda tool used by the groups. Barry Weingast and Rui de Figueiredo suggest that vengeance and tit-for-tat dynamics are often retaliatory. Indeed, most Palestinian suicide bombings were closely linked to actions perpetrated by Israel: the massacre at the al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron by an Israeli settler who killed over 30 worshipers in 1994, the opening of the tunnel beneath the western wall of the Temple Mount in 1996 that led to a week-long clash between Israel and Palestinian security forces, the targeted

³¹⁵ Frisch, p. 3

³¹⁶ 'A Volcano of Vengeance - Fury as Israel Assassinates Second Hamas Leader', *The Australian*, April 19, 2004.

assassinations of Palestinian commanders such as the Hamas engineer Yahya Ayash in early 1996.³¹⁷

However, contrary to Weingast and de Figueiredo's perception that terrorism and suicide bombings in particular are motivated by vengeance, Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter stress rationality as the key factor. They support the view that violent actions were largely used by Hamas and the PIJ to spoil the prospects of peace negotiations just when they seemed most promising.³¹⁸ According to Kydd and Walter, the increase in violence and suicide bombings made the moderate voices on the Palestinian side appear weak, creating doubt on the Israeli side that political concessions would bring peace and calm, thus reducing their motivation to conclude a deal with the Palestinian side. However, it is important to note that the authors failed to analyze the peace accords themselves as the cause for the violence.

Mia Bloom also supports the view that organizations using violence are more motivated by their desire to outbid domestic rivals and increase their popularity on the home front. As noted in Chapter 4, Bloom also believes that Hamas and the PIJ used suicide bombings to challenge the political dominance of Fatah.³¹⁹ Steven David, author of 'Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy Of Targeted Killing', was among the few who predicted the effectiveness of Israeli offensive moves at the height of Palestinian suicide bombings. He predicted that Israel's targeted killings would erode the organizations' infrastructure over time.³²⁰ This analysis draws a parallel with

³¹⁷ Rui de Figueiredo and Barry Weingast, 'Vicious Cycles: Endogenous Political Extremists and Political Violence' (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, September 1998).

³¹⁸ H. Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, 'Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence', *International Organizations* 56 (Spring 2002) 264.

³¹⁹ Bloom, 'Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding', 80.

³²⁰ Steven R. David, 'Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy Of Targeted Killing', *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* No. 51 (Ramat-Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University) 7-8.

David's hypothesis that Israeli counterterrorism decreased Palestinian capabilities, not their motivation. Consider the trends in Palestinian violence since 2000 compared to Israel's actions, described below.

5.2 Measuring the Cost of Palestinian Violence

Overall, Palestinian violence between September 2000 and March 2005 (when the major Palestinian factions accepted a "lull" (*tahdiyya*) in the fighting) increased sharply in the first two years before declining just as sharply in 2003 and 2004. Looking at Israeli fatalities over this time period, there was an increase in deaths in 2001, a dramatic peak of fatalities in 2002 (when Israeli deaths almost doubled), followed by a drop of more than fifty percent in 2003 and a further fifty percent decline in 2004.³²¹ Thus, Israeli fatalities (and casualties) were reduced by 75 percent from 2002 to 2004 (see Table 6 below).

Table 6³²²

Israeli Fatalities of Palestinian Violence in Gaza, West Bank and Israel

Year	Gaza	West Bank	Israel	Total
2000	11	32	4	47
2001	10	95	102	207
2002	25	196	231	452
2003	18	75	121	214
2004	38*	18	56	112
2005	15	14	24	53

* Including two deaths in Israel as a result of Qassam rocket attacks from Gaza
Source: Victims of Palestinian Violence and Terrorism since September 2000,
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Victims+of+Palestinian+Violence+and+Terrorism+sinc.htm>.

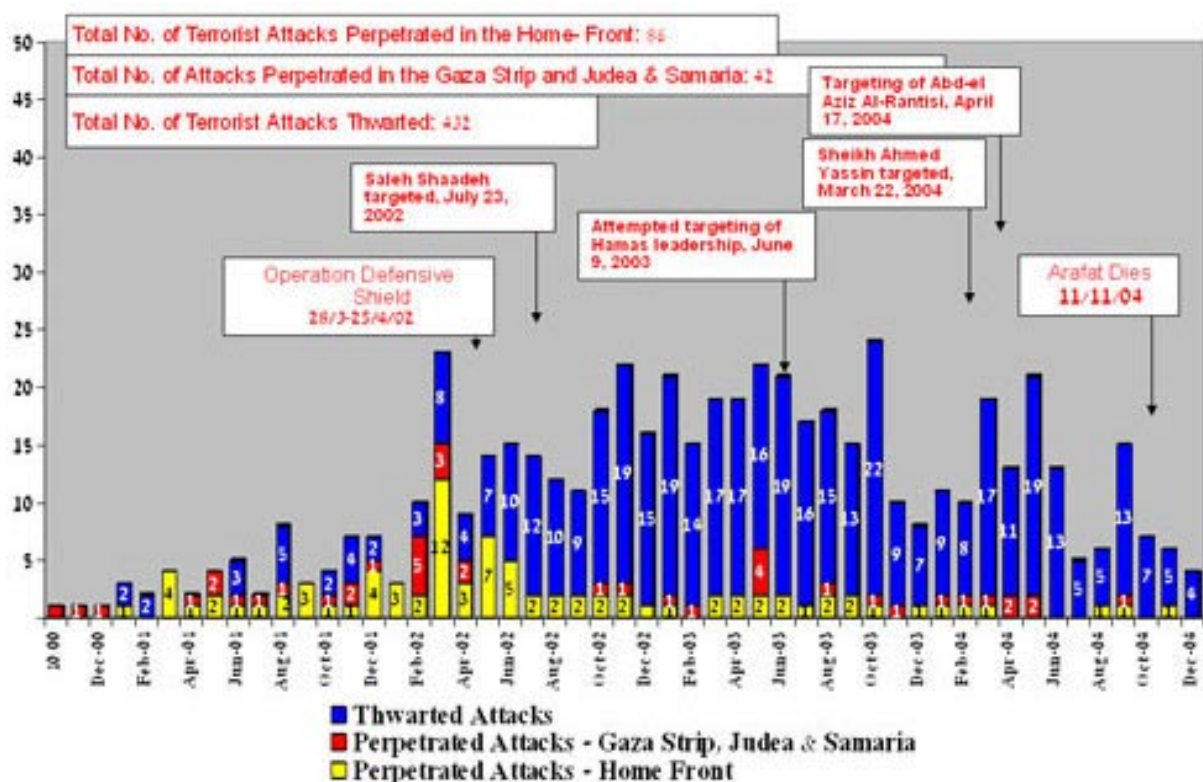
³²¹ Frisch, p. 7

³²² Source: Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006; <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS70.pdf>

Looking at the total number of attacks rather than Israeli casualties produces a similar curve. If one considers suicide bombings specifically, the curve depends on whether one is counting all attempted attacks (including the ones Israeli forces prevented), successful attacks or fatalities. The data available shows that there was a sharp increase in successful suicide attempts from 2000–2002 (from 4 to 35 to 60), followed by a sharp decline in the two following years (equivalent to a 75 percent drop from the peak in 2002 and less than one half the successful suicides carried out in 2001).³²³ Figure 11 below depicts the total number of attempted attacks, including those prevented by the Israeli security forces, perpetrated during the time period 2000 to 2004.

Figure 11³²⁴

Total Number of Perpetrated Attacks vs. Thwarted Attacks, 2000-2004

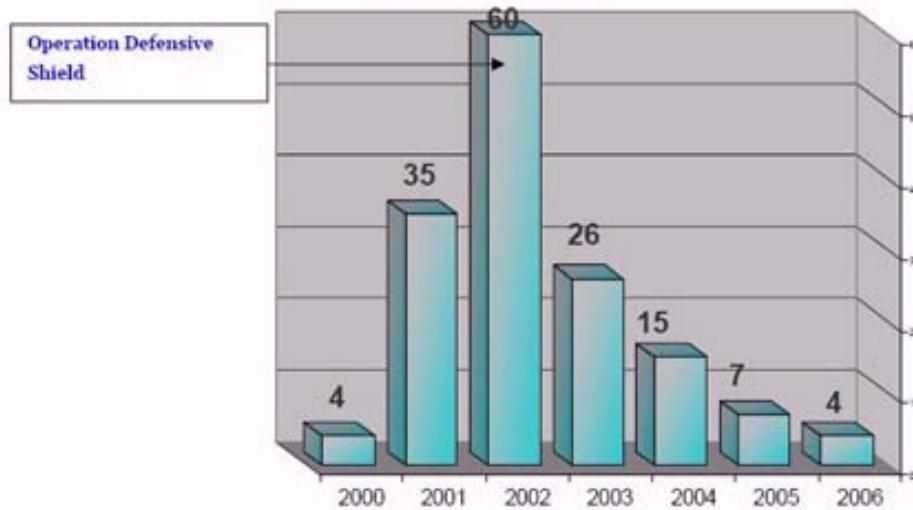


³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Source: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>

Figure 12³²⁵

Suicide Bombing Attacks, 2000-2006



Let us look more closely at the possible reasons why the suicide attacks decreased so dramatically after 2002. As can be seen from Figure 12 above, suicide bombing attacks decreased sharply after 'Operation Defensive Shield' was executed. Operation Defensive Shield was a large-scale military operation conducted by the Israel Defense Forces on March 29, 2002. It was the largest military operation in the West Bank since the 1967 Six-Day War. The operation began with an incursion into Ramallah, followed by invasions into the largest cities in the West Bank, and their surrounding localities (Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Bethlehem, Jenin and Nablus).³²⁶

According to *The Guardian*, during the three weeks of Operation Defensive Shield at least 500 Palestinians were killed and 1500 were wounded. According to the Palestine Red Crescent Society, more than 4,258 people were arrested by the Israeli military. The Israeli offensive left 29 Israeli soldiers dead, and 127 wounded. In addition to loss of life, the operation caused massive economic losses due to

³²⁵ <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism->

[+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Palestinian+terrorism+2006.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Palestinian+terrorism+2006.htm)

³²⁶ 'Report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/10 (Report on Jenin)', United Nations, May 7, 2002

destruction of property and the inability to reach workplaces.³²⁷ Large sectors of the Palestinian population were left homeless by the operation.

The effects of Operation Defensive Shield were an initial drop in half (46 percent) of the number of suicide bombings -- from 22 in February-March to 12 in April-May -- and a 70 percent drop in executed attacks between the first half of 2002 and the second half (43 January-June, 13 July-December). While 2003 had a total of 25 executed suicide bombings in comparison to 56 in 2002, the main difference was the number of attacks which did not come to realization (184) either due to Israeli interception or problems in the execution. 2003 also saw a 35 percent drop in the number of fatalities from 220 deaths in 2002 to 142 deaths resulting from suicide bombings.³²⁸

Until the autumn of 2004, Hamas carried out the greatest number of attacks, after which the PIJ became the dominant organization.³²⁹ In 2006 the decline in the number of suicide bombing attacks continued, following the trend begun in 2002. During the year 2006, four suicide bombing attacks were carried out, compared with seven in 2005 and 14 in 2004. Three were carried out by the PIJ and one by Fatah. Hamas did not carry out any suicide attacks in 2006.³³⁰

³²⁷ Ibid.

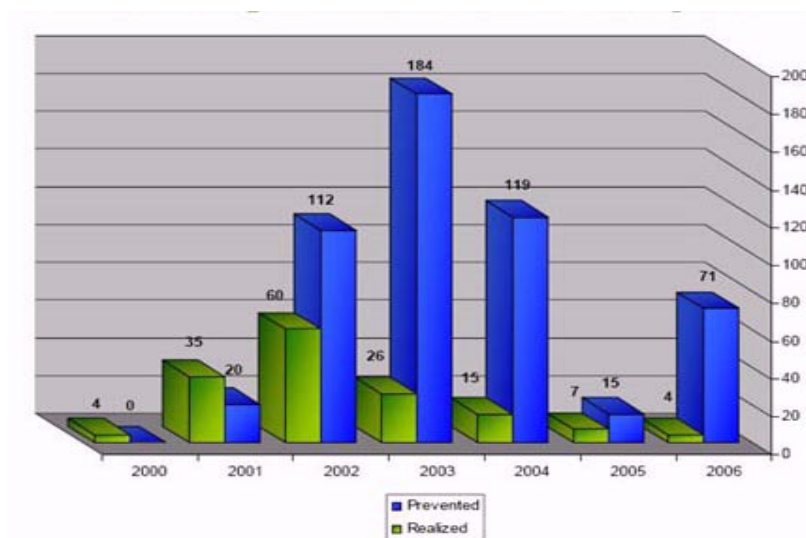
³²⁸ http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/html/final/sp/pa_t/det_8feb_05.htm

³²⁹ "The nature and extent of Palestinian terrorism," Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at Israel Intelligence' Heritage & Commemoration Center (IICC), 1 March 2007.

³³⁰ <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Palestinian+terrorism+2006.htm>

Figure 13³³¹

Realized and prevented suicide bombing attacks 2000-2006



After Operation Defensive Shield, the Palestinian organizations experienced a decreasing ability to carry out suicide bombing attacks, although there was an increase in their motivation to do so. In 2003 there were 184 attempted suicide attacks, compared to 112 in 2002. However, only 26 out of the 184 attempted attacks in 2003 were successful, compared to 60 out of 112 in 2002. Over time, however, the effectiveness of Palestinian suicide attacks decreased, which led to a decline in motivation to carry out such attacks. Measuring all attempted suicide attacks, there was a peak in 2003 with 210 attempts, until there was a decline in 2004 to 134 attempts. The number of attempted suicide acts in 2004 was still nearly three times the number of attempts made in 2001 at 55 attempts. By 2005, however, it was down to 22.³³² However, in 2006 there was again a sharp increase in the motivation of the organizations to carry out suicide bombing attacks. According to data collected by the Israel Security Agency, 279 potential suicide bombers were arrested in the West Bank, a rise of 80% compared with 2005 (154 potential suicide

³³¹ <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Palestinian+terrorism+2006.htm>

³³² Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006; <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS70.pdf>

bombers detained). The Israeli security forces prevented 71 attempted suicide bombing attacks in 2006, most of them originating in the West Bank, some in the Gaza Strip. Most of the attempts were carried out by PIJ and Fatah operatives from the areas of Jenin and Nablus.

5.3 Measuring Palestinian Capabilities in Waging Violence

As the data above shows, the Palestinian organizations were indeed motivated to engage in suicide bombings throughout the period between September 2000 and most of 2004. The problem was not a lack of motivation, as cited in the literature, but declining capabilities and increasingly successful Israeli countermeasures. This also led to reduced damage and fewer casualties on the Israeli side. Effectiveness is undoubtedly an important element in any organizational decision to continue the use of violence. Frisch (2006) even goes as far as comparing militant organizations to business firms who seek maximum sales at minimum cost.³³³ The ratio between the number of operations on one hand and casualties inflicted on the other side is an indicator of the effectiveness of a particular operational method. If one compares the ratio between total number of suicide attacks to Israeli fatalities, that is to say *the effects* of the suicide attacks on the Israeli side, then what becomes evident is that Palestinian overall efficiency peaked in 2002 (at .09 fatality per act of violence), declined in 2003 (.05) and fell sharply in 2004 (.03), about the same efficiency rate of 2001 (see Table 7 below).

³³³ Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006; <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS70.pdf>

Table 7³³⁴

Measuring the Effectiveness of Palestinian Suicide Bombings

Year	Failed Suicides	Successful Suicides	Total Suicide Attempts	Fatalities	Ratio of Successful to Failed Suicides	Ratio of All Suicide Events to Israeli Fatalities
2000	0	4	4	0		
2001	20	35	55	85	1.80	1.6
2002	112	60	172	220	0.50	1.3
2003	184	26	210	142	0.14	0.7
2004	119	15	134	55	0.13	0.4
2005	15	7	22	23	0.47	1.1

The efficiency of suicide bombings dropped by 75 percent from 1.6 fatalities per attempted suicide bombing in 2001 to 0.4 fatalities in 2004 (see Table 7). In 2005, mainly after the lull, there was a sharp drop in the number of attempted and successful suicides. The lethality of suicide bombings increased again in 2004 as both attempted and successful bombings decreased that year. This shows that the Palestinian groups' more selective policy of attempted suicide attacks led to greater efficiency.³³⁵

5.4 Targeted Killings

In response to the Palestinian suicide bombings, Israel regularly assassinated the different Palestinian organizations' top-level leaders (often causing collateral deaths of family members and civilians in the process). Israel also frequently imprisoned and tortured second-level leaders. The organizations such as Hamas

³³⁴ Source: *Palestinian Terrorism in 2005*, available at http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/pdf/palestinian_terror_e.pdf. Pp. 20-22.

³³⁵ Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006; <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS70.pdf>

were branded as terrorist organizations internationally and their bank accounts were frozen. These retaliatory actions were entirely predictable and were meant to undermine the organizations' ability to act. The reasoning was that the higher the costs to the organizations were, the less likely the latter would continue their strategy of suicide bombings. However, although the costs to the organizations were very high, these costs did not prevent them from engaging in suicide attacks.³³⁶

On the contrary, Ganor (2005) stipulated that targeted killings could lead to a boomerang effect, causing the number of suicide attacks to increase after such hits. In Ganor's view, targeted killings increased the suicide bombers' motivation as well as reduced the organizations' operational capabilities. Kaplan et al. (2005) developed a "terror-stock model" of suicide bombings based on a theory proposed by Keohane and Zeckhauser (2003). Within this model, Kaplan et al. (2005) found that, whereas preventive arrests reduced the number of suicide bombings, targeted killings actually increased suicide bombing attacks because the killings intensified and increased the number of recruits to the 'terror stock'. This is also in line with Ganor's boomerang effect.

One of the main indications of the growing human costs to Palestinian organizations was the increasing number of top military and political personnel they were losing to Israeli targeted killings. These took the form of Israeli attacks from the air (mostly in Gaza) and undercover special forces operating in the West Bank. As a recent study by Asaf and Noam Zussman demonstrates, while suicide bombers were usually only secondary in the organization to which they were recruited, this was not the case of those Israel targeted for assassinations. The great majority were not only considered key operatives in the organization by the Israelis, they were also typically

³³⁶ Israel's tactic of demolishing the houses of suicide bombers also did not deter other individuals from volunteering to carry out suicide attacks.

acknowledged as such by the Palestinian organizations themselves after they were killed.³³⁷ The Palestinian groups rarely accused the Israelis of hitting “the wrong man”. On the contrary, the biographical and propaganda material issued after their deaths often enhanced the targeted operatives’ importance to the organization beyond Israel’s justifications for targeting them.³³⁸ According to a Palestinian source, Israel conducted 209 targeted killings until the end of 2004.³³⁹ Targeted killings reached their peak in 2002, with 78 Palestinians assassinated. As Palestinian attacks reached their peak in that same year, Israel continued to pursue its assassination policy with the same intensity, even after the effectiveness of Palestinian attacks declined. So, even though from 2003 to 2004 fatalities resulting from Palestinian violence declined by 36 percent, Israel still conducted 55 targeted killings, a decline of just less than four percent compared to the previous year. This relentlessness in employing targeted killings was also a sign of the growing asymmetry between Israel’s military and intelligence capabilities compared to Palestinian capabilities. Israel’s capabilities were improving while that of the Palestinians’ was declining. Even after the lull, Israel was reluctant to give up its strategy of targeted killings. Even when the number of Israeli fatalities decreased sharply from 142 to 54 in 2005, the number of Palestinians Israel assassinated in relation only decreased from 55 to 33.³⁴⁰ This means that Israel continue its assassination of Palestinians even when the latter’s attacks had clearly declined.

³³⁷ Asaf Zussman and Noam Zussman ‘Targeted Killings: Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Counterterrorism Policy’, Bank of Israel Discussion Paper No. 2005.02 (January 2005) 4-5.

³³⁸ Frisch, “Motivation or Capabilities,” 2006; <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS70.pdf>

³³⁹ See <http://www.phrmg.org/aqsa/list_of_assassination_english.htm>.

³⁴⁰ *Palestinian Terrorism in 2005*, 8.

Table 8: ³⁴¹

Israeli Targeted Killings 2000-2005

Year	Targeted Killings
2000	9
2001	31
2002	78
2003	57
2004	55
2005	33

The survey of attempted and successful Palestinian attacks cited above (see Table 7) raises the question of why the intensity of Palestinian violence declined. As can be seen from Israel's targeted assassination policy and tactics of collective punishment, the Palestinians certainly did not lack motivation to carry out attacks. So why was there such a sharp decline in the number and effectiveness of their attacks? On the contrary, looking at the factors that affected the wellbeing of the Palestinians as a whole, there should have been an increase in Palestinian operations. Israel's military presence in the West Bank meant that the Palestinians had to bear arduous restrictions on their movement, which was a constant source of anxiety and frustration. And there was little improvement between 2002 and 2004; 757 barriers restricted Palestinian movement in the West Bank in October 2003, dropping slightly to 719 by November 2004.³⁴² Military incursions into Gaza, either into the towns and refugee camps of Rafah and Khan Yunis located near the evacuated Israeli settlements in the south, or into the Beit Hanun area in the northern part of the Gaza strip, in fact increased in response to the growing number

³⁴¹ Source: List of Palestinians who were assassinated during the al-Aqsa Intifada, http://www.phrmg.org/aqsa/list_of_assassination_english.htm.

³⁴² Figures derived from maps accessed from <<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/opt/>>.

of rockets launched at Israel within the green line. A minimal decline in Palestinian fatalities by less than five percent and a similarly minimal reduction in restrictions on freedom of movement between 2003-2004 can hardly explain the 36 percent reduction in the total number of suicide attack attempts during that year. On the contrary, the attacks should have increased. So why didn't they?

Table 9: ³⁴³

Palestinian Deaths from September 2000 to September 2004

Year of Intifada	Dates	Number Killed
1	Sep.2000- Sep.2001	714
2	Oct.2001- Sep.2002	1,195
3	Oct.2002- Sep.2003	727
4	Oct.2003- Sep.2004	698
Total		3,334

As noted earlier, Israeli casualties of Palestinian violence had declined by 75 percent by 2004 from its peak in 2002. Overall Palestinian violence declined from its peak in 2002 and then stabilized in 2003-2004. On the other hand, Palestinian frustration remained constant or perhaps even increased, at least until the death of Arafat in November 2004. However, violence, principally by Hamas and the PIJ (who objected to any peace process), should have *increased* during the summer of 2002 when, for the first time, President Bush committed the United States to the establishment of a Palestinian state. In September 2002, this commitment became the basis for the road map, which aimed at establishing a Palestinian state within three years. This should have prompted Hamas and the PIJ, whose ideologies and

³⁴³ Source: http://www.palestinemonitor.org/new_web/4_years_Intifada_anniversary.htm.

aims are in opposition to the PA's, to increase their attacks and play the role of 'spoiler'.

Violent attacks (including suicide attacks) by both Hamas and the PIJ did increase in 2004. In that year, Hamas perpetrated 555 attacks, compared to 281 in 2003, an almost 200 percent increase. The PIJ perpetrated 106 attacks compared to 71 the previous year.³⁴⁴ Some of the increase in attacks by Hamas may have been motivated by revenge, especially for Israel's targeted killings of their leaders. Yet, even if this credibly explains Palestinian motivation, it hardly accounts for the declining performance levels, especially after Arafat's death and the presidential elections in January 2006. Hamas and the PIJ should have been worried about the possibility of a renewed peace process. Instead, they accepted the lull and Hamas more or less maintained it despite repeated Israeli strikes against Palestinian groups.

The sharp increase in attacks in 2003 – 2004 by Hamas and the PIJ are harder to explain in terms of internal competition and outbidding according to the indicators proposed by Bloom - support for suicide bombings and the popularity of the groups over time. Regarding support for suicide bombings, this only declined by three percent in June 2004 (to 62 percent) compared to 65 percent in October 2003.³⁴⁵ However, this indicator can hardly explain the *increase* in violent attacks by Hamas and the PIJ. Nor does the popularity of the groups over time explain the radical increase. Bloom's outbidding argument posits that groups such as Hamas and the PIJ should have increased suicide attacks during periods of declining popularity. Yet, the popularity of Hamas dropped only slightly (from 23 percent in 2003 to 21.7 percent in 2004), while the popularity of the PIJ remained constant or

³⁴⁴ '2004 Terrorism Data', available at <<http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=23521>>.

³⁴⁵ Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006; <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS70.pdf>

slightly increased (5 to 5.5 percent).³⁴⁶ Even more critically, the popularity of Fatah, Hamas' major opponent, declined even more than the popularity for Hamas (29 to 26.4 percent). In any event, neither of these factors can explain why Hamas' attacks nearly doubled from 2003 to 2004. Nor can they explain why in light of the decrease in support for Fatah, the number of attacks it perpetrated actually declined from 117 in 2003 to 97 in 2004. Fatah should have increased the number of its attacks to outbid Hamas.³⁴⁷

Another related argument posits that Hamas increased its attacks to assert its dominance in Gaza in light of Israel's plans to withdraw from Gaza. But this is also hardly convincing. If that were so, why did Hamas accept the lull in fighting six months before Israeli troops were scheduled to withdraw from Gaza? This suggests that the decrease in attacks was not due to a lack of motivation but rather to greatly reduced Palestinian capabilities. It appears that Israel's offensive and defensive moves against Palestinian organizations were indeed highly effective, albeit questionable.

5.5 The Security/Separation Wall

Another effective Israeli countermeasure was the Separation Wall it built and completed in August 2003. Work began on the first part of the route, about 100 kilometers in length, to cordon off Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarem, which were the Palestinian cities that had sent the most number of suicide bombers in the past, primarily to Israeli towns closest to the former green line (Netanya and Hadera).³⁴⁸ A

³⁴⁶ JMCC polls June 2002-June 2004 available at <<http://www.jmcc.org/publicpoll/results.html>>.

³⁴⁷ *Palestinian Terrorism in 2005*, 18.

³⁴⁸ <http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/purpose.htm> (Accessed December 13, 2005.)

further extension running northeast to close off the West Bank from northern Israel was completed in December 2003, creating a barrier between the two towns of Nablus and Jenin and the two Israeli towns, Afula and Beit Shean.³⁴⁹



The Separation wall in Qalqiliya³⁵⁰



An aerial view of the Wall, which annexes parts of the West Bank to Israel, February 17, 2004³⁵¹

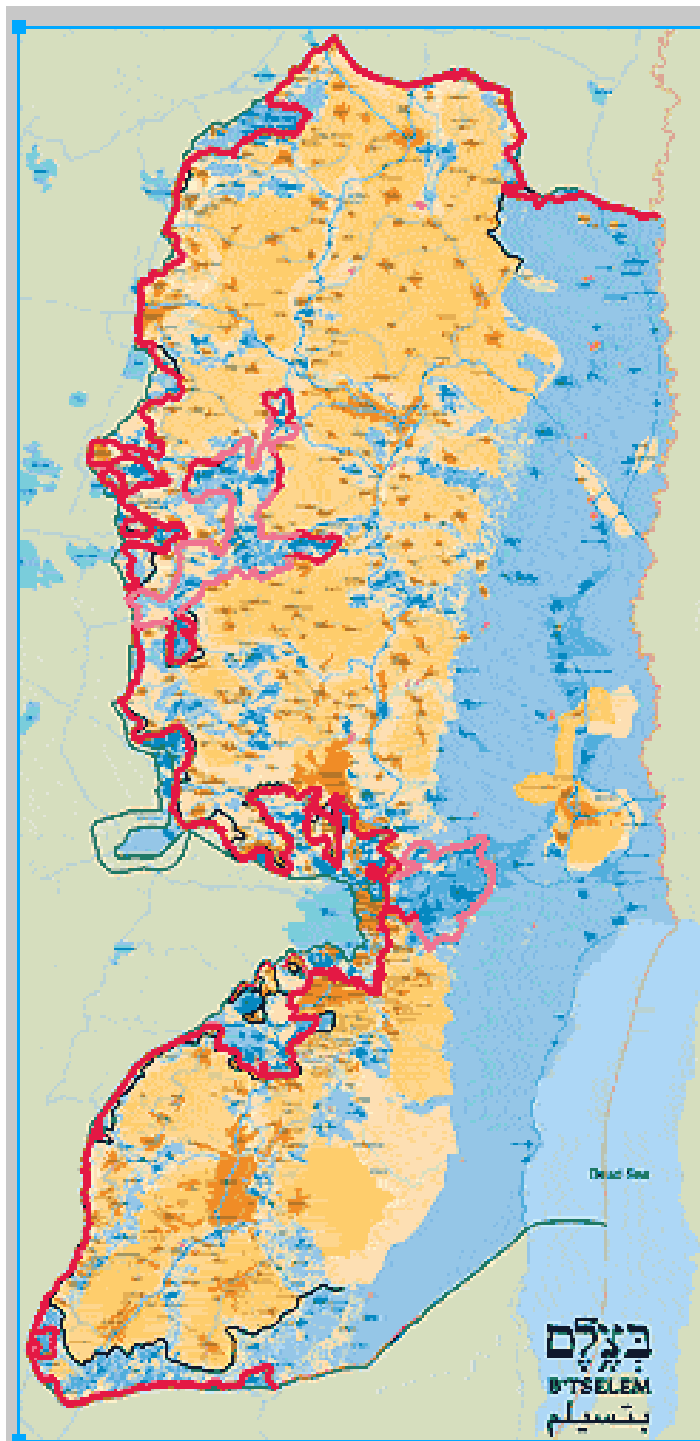
Although a discussion of the political aspects of the building of the barrier is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth mentioning that many human rights organizations on both sides, as well as the Hague-based International Court of Justice have ruled that this wall is a violation of human rights. Its true purpose is actually to annex more Palestinian territory, and was not built for security purposes at all. In fact, according to Gush Shalom, an Israeli peace initiative, “a country can

³⁴⁹ 'Data on the Separation Barrier – April 2004', available at <http://www.btselem.org>

³⁵⁰ Photo: Palestine Monitor

³⁵¹ Photo by Nir Elias/Reuters, 2/18/04, Al-Jazeera.info

never achieve security and peace by enclosing an entire people behind a wall. The imprisonment of a desperate people is a certain recipe for violence and hatred.”³⁵²



B'tselem map of the Separation Wall as approved by the Israeli Cabinet Feb 2005, cutting deep into Palestinian territory³⁵³

³⁵² See: http://www.gush-shalom.org/media/seperationmap_eng.swf

³⁵³ http://www.btselem.org/Download/Separation_Barrier_Map_Eng.pdf

Going back to the effect the wall had on Palestinian suicide attacks, since its completion the patterns of Palestinian attacks have changed significantly. First, the number of attacks, and particularly suicide attacks, dropped. In 2003, 19 suicide attacks were carried out compared to 6 in 2004 and 5 in 2005. From the time the Wall was completed to June 2004 only three attacks, which originated in the northern West Bank, managed to penetrate Israel: in two of them, the perpetrators used gaps in the area where the Wall was still incomplete. In comparison, between September 2000 and June 2003, 73 suicide attacks from the West Bank succeeded in penetrating the same section³⁵⁴. It was noticed that potential and successful suicide attacks were funneled into areas where the Wall was not yet completed. These gaps in the route of the planned Wall were identified by the Palestinian groups as the weakest points in the Israeli defense line.

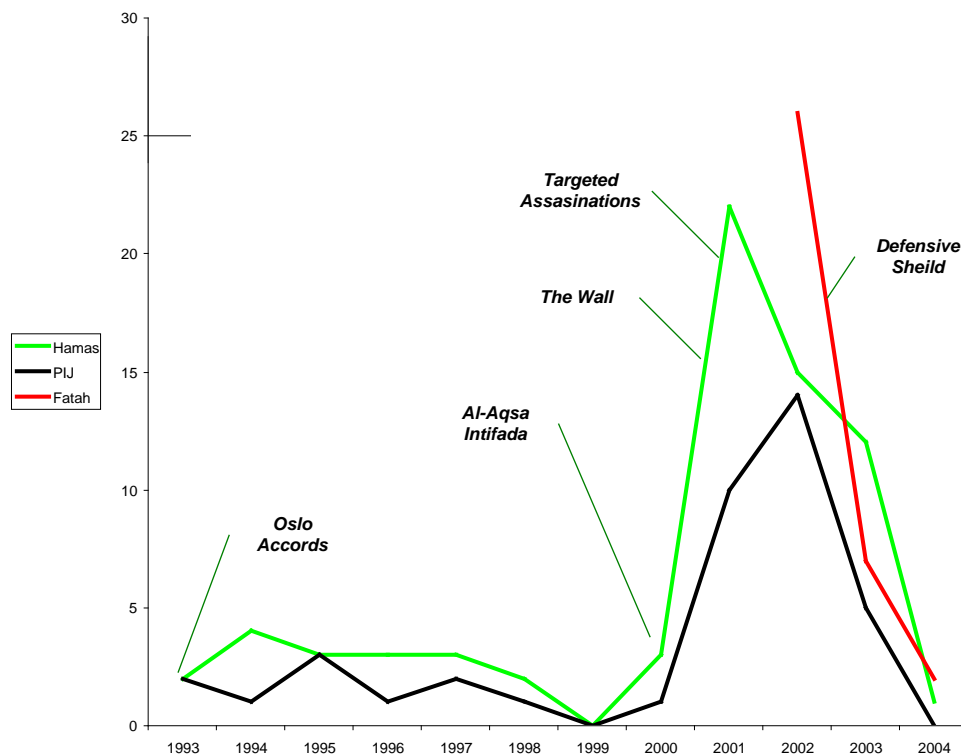
Second, the Wall also influenced the targets selected for attacks: 37 attacks took place in Gaza and the West Bank. As easier access routes to Israel were blocked by the Wall, the entry routes gradually moved to the area between Rosh Ha'ayin and Kafr-Kassem, where the wall was incomplete. Out of the nine suicide attacks which took place in the last six months of 2003, only four took place in central Israel. The others focused on areas which were not protected by the Wall: Sdeh-Trumot, Rosh-Ha'ayin, Ariel, and two attacks in Jerusalem, which was surrounded by the barrier but not completely sealed.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2004.

³⁵⁵ Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006.

Figure 14³⁵⁶

Suicide bombings by Hamas, PIJ and Fatah parallel to political and military events



The third effect of the Wall was on the routes potential suicide bombers had to follow since the summer of 2003. Previously, they had to overcome roadblocks and random checkups on their mission. The building of the Wall, however, forced them to take longer routes to selected targets or to substitute the selected targets for more accessible ones. This is exemplified by the successful and unsuccessful suicide attacks. For example, suicide bombers who were sent by the PIJ in Jenin to targets inside Israel were forced to travel eastward and had to penetrate Israel from the Jordan Rift Valley, where no wall exists. Suicide bombers had more chance of being caught, as they had to overcome greater distances. The organizations then turned southward and tried to cross the barrier into the Jerusalem area, choosing targets in the relatively accessible Jerusalem area. When it became harder to access

³⁵⁶ http://www.eisenhowerseries.com/pdfs/final_05/pedahzur_ppt.pdf

'important' targets, the suicide attacks began to be perpetrated against 'lesser important' targets. For example, suicide bombers from Jenin targeted "non-important" targets such as a single person in Sdeh Trumot (Beth She'an Valley), or a residential house in Kfar Ya'abetz (a small village north of Netanya).³⁵⁷

5.6 Comparing Offensive to Defensive Measures in Reducing Palestinian Capabilities

Analyzing Israeli fatalities on a monthly basis offers a good indicator of the effectiveness of Israeli counterterrorism in reducing Palestinian capabilities. A good example is looking at the period in 2002 when Palestinian suicide attacks peaked. In terms of the effectiveness of Palestinian violence, as mentioned above, the tides turned after the two Israeli offensives conducted in March (Defensive Shield) and June 2002 (Determined Path). During these operations, the major West Bank towns under the jurisdiction of the PA were reoccupied and then continuously penetrated and policed by Israel.³⁵⁸ Palestinian militants lost any sanctuary they had as Israeli troops pursued them without reprieve. These Israeli offensives also resulted in a substantial increase in 'preventive' arrests. When the preventive arrests shot up to 2,682 by April 2002 (compared to 1695 in the previous year), just after the first offensive, and to 4,694 by January 2003 (a 128 percent increase within a year), the number of Palestinian attacks as well the efficiency of suicide bombings began to decline. This was largely due to the IDF's increased accessibility to the suspects.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006.

³⁵⁸ For an excellent analysis of the March offensive and indeed on the tactical novelties of the IDF, see Catignani, 'The Strategic Impasse in Low-Intensity Conflicts: The Gap Between Israeli Counterterrorism Strategy and Tactics During the Al-Aqsa Intifada', 63-67

³⁵⁹ Data from <http://www.btselem.org/english/Statistics/Detainees_and_Prisoners.asp>

A comparison between violent attacks in the West Bank and Gaza offers an even more striking confirmation of the importance of Israeli offensive and preemptive measures of denying Palestinian resistance groups a sanctuary. In the West Bank, attacks more than halved from 2,089 to 1,025 from 2002 - 2003. The number of attacks dropped to 841 in 2004, just over one-third of the attacks that took place two years earlier. By contrast, in Gaza, where Palestinians had a continuous yet porous sanctuary, there was almost no decline in the number of attacks from 2002 to 2004 (2,906 to 2,771 attacks).³⁶⁰

In the short term, contrary to expectations of the Israeli military, not all offensive measures proved to be equally effective. The use of targeted killings was evenly distributed between Gaza and the West Bank. Thus, between the outbreak of hostilities and September 2004, 44.8 percent of the targeted killings took place in Gaza, roughly proportional to Gaza's share of the total Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank.³⁶¹ Nevertheless, violence increased in Gaza and decreased sharply in the West Bank during this period. This indicates that targeted killings cannot explain the variation in trends of violence between these two areas. However, in the long run, targeted killings, especially those directed against the political leadership, did have a major effect. After all, Hamas leaders made reaching a ceasefire contingent on stopping targeted killings and then went on to accept a unilateral "lull" despite an escalated Israeli response against Palestinian factions.³⁶²

Israel did not only react offensively but also toughened its defense. So it is difficult to say whether the reduction of Palestinian capabilities was the result of offensive or defensive measures. Some of the decline in casualties within Israel

³⁶⁰ Palestinian Terrorism in 2005, 18.

³⁶¹ http://www.palestinemonitor.org/new_web/4_years_Intifada_anniversary.htm. See also Edward Kaplan, Alex Mintz, Shaul Mishal and Claude Sambani, 'What Happened to Suicide Bombings in Israel? Insights from a Terror Stock Model', *Studies in Conflict and Terror Studies* 28/3 (May-June 2005) 234.

³⁶² Byman, Daniel. 'Do Targeted Killings Work?' *Foreign Affairs*, 85/2 (March-April 2006) 101-02.

could also be the result of defensive measures, principally the building of the wall (see discussion above). One must note that a greater reduction of fatalities occurred among Israelis living in the West Bank (from 196 deaths in 2002 to 18 in 2004 amounting to 90 percent) where there was no continuous barrier. In comparison, there was only a 75 percent reduction in fatalities for Israeli's living in Israel proper (from 231 to 56), suggesting once again the effectiveness of offensive actions over defensive ones. In other words, Israel's strategy of targeting key leaders of the organizations was more effective than simply trying to separate and enclose the Palestinians in a fenced enclave. As Ben-Israel, Setter and Tishler point out "... it is more important to act against the leadership of terrorist organizations than against the activists in the field, and it is more effective to act against key activists playing a role in producing terrorism than against the terrorists who actually carry it out. By the same principle, it is more effective to prevent a terrorist from entering one's population centers than to attempt to stop him while he is already carrying out his 'mission'." ³⁶³

5.7 From Suicide Bombings to Less Effective Qassam Rockets

Forcing the enemy to undertake less effective means of violence is one more indication of the effectiveness of Israel's countermeasures. As Ender and Sandler noted in their seminal work more than a decade ago, perpetrators of organized violence substitute new techniques of violence to replace those that are no longer

³⁶³ Isaac Ben- Israel, Oren Setter, and Asher Tishler, 'R& D and the War on Terrorism: Generalizing the Israeli Experience', in Andrew James, ed., *Science and Technology: Policies for the Anti- Terrorism Era* (Oxford: IOS Press), forthcoming.

efficient.³⁶⁴ Looking at data on the means of violence used by the Palestinian groups in Gaza clearly demonstrated that suicide bombings declined in the face of both offensive and defensive measures. As perpetrating suicide bombings became more difficult, Palestinian ballistic and mortar activity increased significantly compared to other means (side bombs, suicide and car bombings, road side shooting).³⁶⁵ From 2003 to 2004, Qassam rocket attacks increased by nearly 300 percent (from 105 to 309), mortar attacks by nearly 200 percent (from 708 to 1231) with declines in attempted suicide bombings and the 40 percent decline in successful suicide attacks (from 26 to 15).³⁶⁶ These substituted techniques, however, were less effective. Whereas suicide attacks comprised less than one percent of the attacks between 2000 and 2005, they caused nearly half of Israeli fatalities since 2000 (525 of 1048 fatalities). Qassam rocket and mortar attacks proved to be less effective. Over 610 Qassam attacks on Israel within the green line yielded only two fatalities between 2001 and 2004 and eleven in the following year. Launching Qassams has proved dangerous and costly to the Palestinians themselves; tens of Palestinian fighters have died launching them and others have been killed when they misfire.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, 'The Effectiveness Of Antiterrorism Policies: A Vector-Autoregression-Intervention Analysis', *American Political Science Review*, 87/ 4 (Dec. 1993) pp. 829-844. Isabelle Duyvestey, 'The Paradoxes of Terrorism: an Attempt at Theory' (paper presented at WISC Conference, Istanbul, August 2005) 12.

³⁶⁵ Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006.

³⁶⁶ '2004 Terrorism Data', 7.

³⁶⁷ For a recent article by a Palestinian analyst describing the use of Qassams as detrimental to Palestinian interests, see Umar Hilmi al-Ghawl: 'Su'al al-Yawm: Ayu Muqawama Nuridu?' *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 13 April 2006.

5.8 Short and Medium-Term Gains

In the short run, Israel might have prevailed against the Palestinian factions in persuading most of them to accept a lull in fighting in February 2005. But in the long run, Israel has far from eradicated Palestinian sources of violence, either militarily or politically. Militarily, the Palestinians have been far less successful in waging successful suicide bombings after Israel's offensive and defensive countermeasures took effect. But Palestinian resistance has not ceased, it has simply taken other forms. This suggests that the organizations' infrastructure of planning and executing attacks remains largely in place. Politically, the situation remains problematic. The Palestinian Authority's loss of control to factions and militias, Muhammad Abbas' failure as a leader that all of the Palestinians respect and support, and Hamas' assumption to government coupled with Israel's refusal to accept its election to power, has effectively ruled out the option of Palestinian statehood. Nor are the prospects very promising. In fact, developments since Hamas' rise to power - the growing rivalry between the presidency and the government, the violence between PA security forces loyal to the presidency and the in-fighting between Hamas and Fatah - has only reduced the prospects of a Palestinian center able to come to an agreement with Israel.

Neither do peace prospects with Israel look promising. From the day Israel withdrew from Gaza, they set about ensuring that Gaza would fail economically. Even before Hamas was elected in 2006, Israel had already been blockading Gaza. The Palestinians had to appeal to US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and James Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, to pressure Israel to allow even a few trucks into Gaza each day. Israel agreed, then went back on their agreement. Even Yossi Alpher, a former official in the Mossad intelligence service and an ex-

adviser on peace negotiations to the then prime minister, Ehud Barak, conceded that the blockade of Gaza is a failed strategy that might have strengthened Hamas. "I don't think anyone can produce clear evidence that the blockade has been counterproductive, but it certainly hasn't been productive. It's very possible it's been counterproductive. It's collective punishment, humanitarian suffering. It has not caused Palestinians in Gaza to behave the way we want them to, so why do it? I think people really believed that, if you starved Gazans, they will get Hamas to stop the attacks. It's repeating a failed policy, mindlessly."³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Quoted in <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/04/israel-gaza-hamas-hidden-agenda>

6 Conclusion

Many of the recent studies on political violence have focused on individual motivation. This analysis, however, suggests that organizational capabilities rather than motivation explain the effectiveness of Palestinian suicide bombings. Palestinian capabilities were largely dictated by the effective offensive and defensive measures employed by Israel's security forces. This paper has demonstrated that the Palestinian organizations used suicide bombing attacks as a strategic tactic, but as Israel's counterterrorism campaign became increasingly effective, this led to declining Palestinian capabilities. The decline occurred despite continuously high motivation levels amongst Palestinians to engage in resistance in general, and suicide bombings in particular. Israeli counterterrorism methods reduced the effects and effectiveness of Palestinian violence considerably. Within two years after the peak level of Palestinian violent resistance, the costs to the Israeli state and society dropped by 75 percent.³⁶⁹ Theoretically, the Israeli case shows the validity of the arguments made by Arreguin-Toft, Sandler and Acre and others, who demonstrated the existence of the substitution effect in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The substitution effect has also proven true for suicide bombings. Substitution appears when the efficiency of any particular means of violence declines. Suicide bombings, although efficient at first, became an inefficient means of resistance when Israel began killing key operatives, conducting massive preventive arrests, and building the 'security wall'. In this sense, suicide bombings are no different than any other tactic which is susceptible to overexposure in fighting a superior enemy. So far, the substitutes the Palestinians have used have not proven to be nearly as effective or

³⁶⁹ Frisch, "Motivation or Capabilities," 2006

lethal as suicide bombings. However, even though Palestinian violence after 2005 declined, and its efficiency is reduced, resistance still remains. This suggests that only a fair and just peace process that addresses all of the needs and concerns of the Palestinians as an occupied people can end Palestinian violence against Israel. On the other hand, the peace process will not end internal conflicts and violence between the different Palestinian factions. However, finding a solution to both political factors is beyond the scope of this paper.

This report addressed Palestinian suicide bombers perpetrating attacks against Israel, so its conclusions may not extend beyond this case. What is valid for the Palestinian organizations may not be valid for other organizations around the globe that use suicide bombings tactics to achieve their political aims. The case of Palestinian suicide bombers supports the view that religious and nationalist appeals that portray self-sacrifice as martyrdom are instrumental in producing volunteers for suicide attacks. The Palestinian volunteers were not motivated to carry out suicide bombings because they are the best possible tactic in the face of the political environment or rational calculations of costs and benefits. This is the rationale of the organizations that recruit them. Individuals, on the other hand, are inspired by the redemptive nature of self-sacrifice.³⁷⁰ Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades framed religious and nationalist appeals to manipulate individual minds. They combined religious texts and historical narratives with rituals to create a culture that honors martyrdom. According to Hafez, these two factors -the cultural context of Islamic revivalism and the political context of nationalist conflict - allowed those appeals to be embraced by the broader public and potential bombers. The

³⁷⁰ Hafez, Mohammed. 2006b. *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

Palestinian groups effectively used the desire for national empowerment in the face of powerlessness to shake the passive masses into action and motivate individuals to undertake “heroic” acts. The Palestinian groups also effectively used the desire for vengeance that individuals perceive when members of their community are humiliated or traumatized by the enemy.

The case of the Palestinian suicide bombers shows that although the Palestinian groups appeared to be religious outwardly, they had strategic organizational considerations in adopting suicide bombings as a method of resistance in light of their inferior capabilities vis-a-vis the Israeli army. Thus, it is a mistake to equate suicide bombings with religious fundamentalism. Both religious and secular Palestinian factions saw the value of using suicide attacks.

At the level of society, the Palestinian case shows that the wider community condoned “martyrdom operations” under two conditions: (1) the Palestinian community felt a deep sense of victimization and threat by Israel, both politically and nationally, and (2) legitimate authorities in the Palestinian community promoted or at least acquiesced to extreme violence. This shows that the phenomenon of volunteering for suicide bombings is closely connected with the broader political context in Palestinian society. The Palestinian organizations, no matter how appealing their ideologies and political rhetoric were, could not have generated such high numbers of volunteers for suicide attacks without the presence of opportunities and threats in the society.

Israel's experience with Palestinian suicide bombers offers many lessons on *how to* and *how not to* deal with campaigns of suicide bombings. First, in the first three months of the uprising, Israel's excessive use of force, including live bullets, rockets, tanks, and targeted assassinations, escalated the conflict. Israel's reaction

to the initially nonviolent Palestinian resistance with brutal violence and punitive collective measures gave the Palestinian militant organizations the legitimacy to use violence in return and attack Israeli civilians. Israel's iron fist policy only resulted in a backlash that produced more deaths in the long run.³⁷¹

In the case of the Palestinians, the adoption of suicide bombings during the first two years of the uprising was due to a miscalculation that Israel would succumb to the pressure caused by the suicide attacks on its civilians and withdraw from the occupied territories, just as it had withdrawn from southern Lebanon in May 2000. The popular belief was and is that Hezbollah's armed resistance forced the Israeli forces to withdraw. However, only after Israel refused to make major concessions and intensified its counter-insurgency methods against the Palestinian groups, did the latter begin talking about a ceasefire. After Operation Defensive Shield and other incursions, more and more Palestinians came to recognize that militarizing the uprising had been a strategic mistake.³⁷² As one Palestinian commentator put it, "When the [*al-Aqsa*] uprising began, we aspired to liberate the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. By the end of 2001, our demands regressed to calling for a return to the status quo of September 28, 2000. A little later we lowered our expectations to the point that we are content to return to the conditions on March 29, 2002, the eve of [Israel's Defensive Shield] incursion into the West Bank. [In 2003], none of us aspire[d] to more than having President Arafat left unharmed."³⁷³

³⁷¹ Hafez, 2006.

³⁷² Gideon Alon and Amira Hass, "IDF: Voices Growing in Fatah for end to suicide attacks," *Ha'aretz*, August 13, 2002; Khaled Abu Toameh, "Arafat's economic adviser calls for cease-fire," *Jerusalem Post*, December 5, 2002; Danny Rubinstein, "Nonviolence: Why didn't we think of that before?" *Ha'aretz*, August 3, 2003.

³⁷³ Wahid Abdelmajid, "al-Intifada al-falastiniya bayn khayari al-murajaa wal-tarajua" [The Uprising between two Options: Rethinking or Retreat], *al-Hayat*, October 8, 2002. See similar remarks by Nabil Amr, former minister of Information in the Palestinian Authority, in Khalid Amayreh, "Palestinians split on 'armed Intifada'," *al-Jazeera*, October 19, 2003.

The third lesson is closely related to the second. Given that the organizations calculate the costs and benefits of different methods of action, and they chose suicide bombings because they were considered an effective means to achieve their goals, the costs to the Palestinian organizations should have been raised in ways that targeted only the militants without harming innocent civilians. By harming civilians in the process of targeting the Palestinian factions, Israel gave legitimacy to the organizations' armed struggle and increased their support from the Palestinian society. One way is to offer the Palestinian organizations an alternative, less violent means to resist the occupation. A policy of carrot and stick, so-to-speak. Israel's relentless military pressure and refusal to grant any concessions forced Hamas and the other factions to accept a ceasefire in late 2001 and 2003. However, Israel's refusal to accept a ceasefire and insistence that the PA dismantle 'the terrorist infrastructure' left the Palestinian groups with no real alternative. Very few organizations, no matter how serious the predicament in which they find themselves, will agree to surrender and declare defeat without a bitter fight to the end. In other words, Israel's policy of a stick without a carrot left the Palestinian groups no way out other than violent resistance. Rather than create opportunities to pursue political initiatives, Israel in effect insisted on an unconditional surrender. Such reasoning is not logical in the face of fragmented and decentralized militant groups who have – and are fighting for - the sympathy and support of the population. Although Israel is too superior militarily to be defeated in a full-on confrontation, Hamas and other groups are too strong politically to be made to surrender unconditionally. As a result, until recently, Palestinian factions continued their attacks against Israel despite having recognized that violence had not achieved its intended aims.

6.1 *The status quo*

In 2007, only one suicide attack occurred in Israel - the double suicide bombing in Dimona, Israel, on February 4, 2008. It was the first suicide attack in over a year.³⁷⁴ The most recent Hamas-claimed suicide bombing had occurred more than three years earlier, on January 18, 2005. Even Islamic Jihad had significantly decreased its suicide attacks before its most recent suicide bombing, on January 29, 2007.³⁷⁵ It seems that Palestinian organizations had abandoned suicide bombings as a tactic.

The end of Palestinian suicide bombings does not come as a surprise, despite how effective they have been. Since the first Palestinian suicide bombing in 1994, suicide attacks have claimed the lives of 866 Israeli victims (not including the bombers). Compared to other forms of violent resistance the Palestinian groups have engaged in since the 1967 War, 659 victims have died as the result of all other types of confirmed Palestinian attacks in Israel³⁷⁶. If fatalities were an indicator of the effectiveness of a given tactic, then suicide bombings can be said to have been by far the Palestinian groups' most effective tactic. But if this tactic was so effective at inflicting casualties, why did Palestinian organizations abandon it?³⁷⁷

The answer is manifold. They are either unable or unwilling to conduct suicide attacks anymore, or both. The Palestinian factions may be unable to launch suicide

³⁷⁴ Schechter, Erik. 2004. Where Have All the Bombers Gone? Jerusalem Post, August 6.

³⁷⁵ The one suicide bombing in Israel in 2007 was a joint Islamic Jihad–Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades attack on a bakery in Eilat, on January 29. See the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism's (MIPT) Terrorism Knowledge Base, "Terrorist Incident Reports: Incidents by Tactic," accessed January 14, 2008, available from <http://www.tkb.org/IncidentTacticModule.jsp>.

³⁷⁶ Schechter, Erik. 2004. Where Have All the Bombers Gone? Jerusalem Post, August 6.

³⁷⁷ Yoram Schweitzer, a research fellow at Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies, notes that "The rockets are much less effective in terms of fatalities, and this is very crucial. This is a weapon of harassment, rather than a weapon of killing. It's good for harassment, but at the end of the day, the number of casualties has the largest psychological effect." Quoted in Dion Nissenbaum and Cliff Churgin, "2007 May Be Safety Milestone for Israel," McClatchy-Tribune News Service (December 7, 2007), p. 1.

bombings because of Israel's preventive security measures, such as the security wall or its extensive intelligence network. In 2006, Israel's security measures prevented all but two Palestinian suicide bombers from entering Israel. And since 2005, Palestinian militant operations in Israel have been increasingly rare. Only a few suicide bombings and attacks with firearms have occurred. However, the effectiveness of Israel's security measures does not explain why Hamas stopped conducting suicide bombings a full two years before the PIJ's attack in 2007. If these security measures really do explain the almost total abandonment of Palestinian suicide bombings as a tactic, then both groups should have ceased these attacks at around the same time.³⁷⁸

Palestinian organizations may have been able to launch only one suicide bombing in 2007 (with Hamas taking a three-year break from the tactic) due to a lack of resources such as financial support, materials, or potential suicide bombers, although this seems highly unlikely. Even though Iraqi funding for the families of Palestinian suicide bombers stopped in 2003³⁷⁹, the Palestinian organizations do not seem to have a shortage of resources. According to the Terrorism Knowledge Base Iran currently contributes funding to both Hamas and Islamic Jihad.³⁸⁰ If this is the case, it seems unlikely that Iran would instruct Hamas to stop using suicide bombings two years before the PIJ. It is unlikely that Hamas or any of the other Palestinian organizations did not have enough money or resources in 2007 to conduct more than one successful suicide bombing.

³⁷⁸ Schechter, Erik. 2004. Where Have All the Bombers Gone? Jerusalem Post, August 6.

³⁷⁹ From the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000 to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, Saddam Hussein distributed more than \$35 million to the families of killed Palestinian militants and civilians. These disbursement included payments of \$25,000 to the families of suicide bombers. See Associated Press, "Saddam Pays \$225,000 to Families of Slain Palestinians," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, (March 14, 2003), p. A15.

³⁸⁰ Terrorism Knowledge Base, "Group Profile: Hamas" and "Group Profile: Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)," Website, accessed January 14, 2008, available from <http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=49> and <http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=82>, respectively.

It is also unlikely that the reason for the decline in suicide attacks was a shortage of volunteers and recruits with which to conduct the operations. From December 2005 to June 2006, a time during which Hamas launched no suicide bombings, Palestinian support for armed attacks against Israeli civilians increased from 40 to 56 percent. In a December 2006 public opinion poll, conducted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip³⁸¹, 56.5 percent of those surveyed supported the continuation of armed resistance against Israel.³⁸² This level of Palestinian support for armed resistance against Israel suggests that Palestinian organizations would have had enough willing recruits for suicide bombing operations.

For its part, Israel did not stop its oppressive measures against Palestinians. On the contrary, following the election of Hamas to head the PA in early 2006, Israel and the international community began blocking aid to Gaza with the intention of forcing the people of Gaza to rethink their support for Hamas. Instead, Hamas consolidated its control of the Gaza Strip, reinforcing its separation from the Fatah-dominated West Bank. According to Israeli media, one of the first acts of Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas prime minister elected in 2006, was to send a message to the Bush White House offering a long-term truce in return for an end to Israeli occupation. His offer was not even acknowledged.³⁸³ Instead, the daily Jerusalem Post reported, Israeli policymakers sought to reinforce the impression that “it would be pointless for Israel to topple Hamas because the population [of Gaza] is

³⁸¹ by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR)

³⁸² In this poll, 20.7 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that “the peace process is not successful in ending occupation [sic] and should be stopped in favour of resort [sic] to armed action” and 35.8 percent agreed with the statement that “the peace process should not be stopped because it still might succeed, but at the same time armed action should continue.” This poll sampled 1270 Palestinian adults and had a margin of error of ± 3 percentage points. See Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Survey Research Unit, “Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 22 (December 14–16, 2006),” accessed January 14, 2008, available from <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2006/p22e1.html>.

³⁸³ Jonathan Cook, in Counterpunch, November 17, 2008: “They are all Hamas: The Real Goal of Israel’s Blockade of Gaza”, available at <http://www.counterpunch.org/cook11172008.html>.

Hamas".³⁸⁴ In short, if anything has made Palestinian organizations unable to conduct suicide bombings, it is Israel's security measures. However, these measures do not explain why Hamas took a three-year break from conducting suicide bombing operations.

The answer may be that, in addition to Israel's security measures, Palestinian groups have become unable and also actually unwilling to conduct suicide bombings. One explanation for this unwillingness may be that suicide bombings have not been as effective in inducing terror as the number of Israeli fatalities suggests. The Palestinian organizations took a tactical shift away from suicide bombings, while at the same time continuing their strategic goals of resistance. If this is the case, the Palestinian organizations would need a more effective or terrifying tactic to replace suicide bombings. Missile attacks, which include mortar and rocket attacks, may be such a substitution. These attacks have increased in direct proportion to the decrease in suicide bombings. The question remains, though, whether missile attacks are more effective at inducing terror than suicide bombings. The number of fatalities suggests that they are not: from the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000 through March 2007, 29 people were killed as a result of missile attacks.³⁸⁵ However, missile attacks may create a level of terror beyond the actual number of fatalities. Yet even if this were the case, this would only affect those Israelis living within missile range of the Gaza Strip, since Palestinian organizations have only rarely launched missiles from the West Bank. If Palestinian organizations believe they can achieve their strategic objectives of forcing Israel to make concessions by inducing terror on only a small percentage of the Israeli population

³⁸⁴ Ibid. According to this thinking, collective punishment of the population in Gaza is justified because there are no true civilians in Gaza.

³⁸⁵ Only three victims died in such attacks on Israeli targets before the second Intifada began.

(namely those living within missile range), then the shift from suicide bombings to missile fire makes strategic sense. But this reasoning also seems unlikely.

It is also unlikely that the tactical shift from suicide bombings to missiles was a strategic shift to reach accommodations with Israel. The most obvious proof in support of this argument is that no accommodation has taken place between Palestinian organizations and Israel since the second Intifada began. In fact, even though Hamas proposed and upheld a ceasefire in 2007 and 2008, neither Hamas nor the PIJ has seriously considered the possibility of abandoning violent resistance or even recognizing Israel. These were the two preconditions, however, that the PLO had to meet in 1989 before entering into negotiations with Israel. A recent PCPSR survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip shows that such an accommodation would be unlikely. Only 28 percent of those who support Hamas also support the Clinton final status conditions, which form the basis for the round of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations that began in November 2007.³⁸⁶ In comparison, 63 percent of supporters of President Mahmud Abbas' Fatah party support the Clinton parameters.

So, if Palestinian unwillingness to conduct suicide bombings is based neither on a strategic shift towards accommodation nor a tactical shift towards coercing Israel more effectively, then what is the reason for the shift away from suicide bombings? One possibility is that Palestinian organizations may have other strategic objectives other than coercing Israel. In this context, Palestinian organizations should not be viewed as 'hives of fanatical ideologues intent upon Israel's destruction' but as 'firms marketing different brands of Palestinian resistance'.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Survey Research Unit, "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 26 (December 11–16, 2007)," accessed January 14, 2008, available from <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2007/p26e1.html>. This poll sampled 1270 Palestinian adults and had a margin of error of ± 3 percentage points.

³⁸⁷ Nathan W. Toronto, "Where Have All the Bombers Gone?", 20/04/2008, available at <http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/284/currentpage/2/Default.aspx>

Their primary objective may be to maintain or advance their organization's relevance in Palestinian politics. Changing Israel's behavior may be a secondary objective. The Palestinian organizations advance their political relevance by gaining public support and approval for defending the one genuine path—according to them—to defeating Israel. As long as support for armed attacks against Israel among the Palestinian population is high, there will be competition amongst the Palestinian groups for the largest share of “the resistance market”.³⁸⁸

The circumstances surrounding the February 4, 2008 suicide bombing seem to support this argument. After a three-year pause in suicide attacks, Hamas conducted this attack in a city that had not been struck before, and when there had not been any Palestinian suicide bombings for a year. The surprise effect of the attack made it potentially effective for gaining popular Palestinian support for Hamas' brand of resistance. At first, Hamas did not claim the attack, but the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and two other groups did. Only then did Hamas publish its claim in response, stating that it had waited for security reasons. Israeli security forces then demolished the homes of the Hamas suicide bombers. Because of the boldness of the Dimona attack, Hamas stood to gain popular support. When other organizations claimed the attack, Hamas had to do the same and provide evidence that it was the actual perpetrator. Hamas could not let others profit from the attack at its expense.

These dynamics between the groups provide a valid explanation for the end to Palestinian suicide bombing attacks over the last three years. Consider Palestinian organizations as resistance firms responding to the circumstances that Israel imposes on them. Israel's preventative security measures undoubtedly kept some suicide bombers from entering Israel. But Israel's active security measures

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

have had such a damaging effect on Palestinian organizations' capabilities that suicide bombings ceased to be cost-effective. In other words, as long as the Palestinian organizations bore the brunt of Israeli security measures, then it became less likely that they could continue suicide bombings. Israel began its policy of targeted killings in December 2000, shortly after the start of the second Intifada. By 2004, this tactic had achieved significant results against Hamas. In that year, Israeli security forces killed the two principal leaders of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi, within a month of each other. Then, in January 2005, Hamas launched its last suicide bombing for three years.

Missile attacks, the alternative to suicide bombings, have not exactly been a disadvantage, either. Although missile attacks kill fewer people and affect far fewer Israelis on a daily basis than suicide bombings did, they nevertheless do elicit a response from the Israeli government. The missile attacks are enough to induce the Israeli government to take action against the Palestinians. This is evidenced by the economic blockade of the Gaza Strip, whose lifting the Israelis have made contingent on the cessation of missile attacks. These Israeli responses are an advantage for Palestinian organizations: more Palestinians either blame Israel for their harsher conditions or exhibit greater sympathy for the organizations' causes, or both. In addition, by launching missiles into Israel, Palestinian organizations demonstrate that they are still doing something to resist Israel's occupation, which also boosts their market share amongst Palestinians.

Only time will tell if this shift to missile attacks will hold. But if the IDF keeps up its targeted killings and daily incursions into the Palestinian territories, and if months or years continue to pass between suicide attacks, then this will be increasing proof that competition between Palestinian organizations is a major factor

in the timing and type of attacks that they launch. Palestinian organizations are in a continuous struggle against each other as much as they are in a continuous struggle against Israel. Perhaps Israeli authorities are banking on this fact as well, in their strategy against the Palestinians.

6.1.1 Palestinian Interfactional Rivalry & the Collapse of Palestinian Resistance

The Palestinians have a bitter joke: What would happen if the Palestinian Authority disappeared? The answer: How could you tell?³⁸⁹

The dysfunction and corruption of the Palestinian Authority was one of the main reasons Palestinian voters threw out Fatah in the legislative elections of January 2006. The Palestinians took their chances with Hamas for many reasons. One was the Islamic movement's reputation for discipline, unity and honesty. Hamas seemed to act with clear goals and unity, its spokesmen faithfully sticking to the party line. However, power has proven to be a trap for Hamas, deepening its divisions and causing new ones. While Hamas was fighting with Fatah in Gaza and trying to strengthen its control over the security forces, it was unable to control its own leaders in exile in Syria. Hamas was also unable to control its military wing, which has little regard for Ismail Haniya, Hamas' prime minister.

Israel's invasion of Gaza in response to the abduction of an Israeli soldier in July 2006 has made Hamas' divisions more evident. At the same time, Israel's invasion of Gaza has further undermined Palestinian moderates, pushing the Palestinians to the extremist stance taken by those living abroad. However, this

³⁸⁹ Steven Erlanger, 'Palestinian Divisions Deepen', The International Herald Tribune, 4 July 2006, <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/07/03/news/hamas>.

may serve Israel's short-term goals of weakening or destroying the Hamas government, and portraying it as incapable of making peace, as it had done with Arafat.

Israel has a long tradition of playing off Palestinian divisions and deepening them. It favored one or another of the groups in the original PLO; it encouraged and supported Hamas in the 1980's as an alternative to Yasser Arafat; it tried to deal only with Palestinian mayors and clan leaders in the West Bank and Gaza before Arafat and his lieutenants returned from exile in 1994 after the Oslo peace accords. Israel was quite aware of the tensions between the domestic Palestinian leaders (most of whom had experience with Israelis, albeit in jail) and the exiled revolutionaries who had returned and quickly grabbed economic and military power. Israel is also skilled at stirring up Fatah-Hamas rivalries, trying to create a form of chaos in the occupied territories.³⁹⁰

Hamas has had to face several misfortunes in this latest crisis, both internal and external. The newly elected Hamas government could not pay salaries or provide social benefits because of the economic embargo that their election provoked. And Hamas was unable to persuade its militants, who take their orders from abroad, even to discuss a diplomatic solution with Israel.³⁹¹ Instead, with Israel conducting its "Operation Summer Rains," sending troops into Gaza and bombing power plants and ministries, Hamas was risking its hold on power and its power centre in Gaza itself.

But the Hamas leaders abroad, such as Khaled Meshal, Mousa Abu Marzouk and Muhammad Nazzal, are not interested in domestic issues. Ali Jarbawi, a dean at Birzeit University, explains that "The farther you are from the real problems on the

³⁹⁰ Erlanger, July 2, 2006.

³⁹¹ Erlanger, July 2, 2006

ground, the more radical and inflexible you tend to be. That was true of Arafat in exile, and it's true of Meshal in Damascus."³⁹² According to Nasser al-Kidwa, a nephew of Arafat who was the Palestinian foreign minister in the former Fatah-led government, Meshal, who is operating out of Syria and is said to fear losing influence to those inside the territories, has actively manipulated the current crisis. "Meshal's aim is to send a clear message about who is in control of Hamas - first to those in Hamas, and then to Palestinians generally."³⁹³

In the absence of a real state, the competition for power among the Palestinians, particularly among armed groups, commanders and clans, means that those on the extreme ends tend to set the agenda.³⁹⁴ While Hamas kept its own militants from shooting Qassam rockets or conducting suicide attacks against Israel for about 16 months until the end of 2006, it did not stop others from doing so. It could not turn its back on "the resistance". Finally, its own militants, responding to popular anger over the deaths of Palestinian civilians in Israeli strikes, pushed Hamas to give up the cease-fire altogether. That gave Israel a pretext to move in with force to try to strangle the Hamas government at its power centre in Gaza. Once Israel decided that the Hamas government could not control its militants, it concluded that the rocket attacks would never end without military intervention.

As for Fatah, after its humiliating defeat in the January 2006 legislative elections, Fatah leaders attempted to hinder the new Hamas-led government from functioning.³⁹⁵ Before handing over their ministries to Hamas, many Fatah ministers promoted their followers and filled positions with Fatah supporters. This left Hamas

³⁹² Quoted in Erlanger, Steven: 'Hamas: Rivalry breeds extremes', The International Herald Tribune, July 2, 2006

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Yaghi, Muhammad, "The Growing Anarchy in the Palestinian Territories," May 16, 2006, The Washington Institute, Policy Watch #1103

in a position where it either had to accept these changes or face a full-on confrontation with the civil service.³⁹⁶

To increase internal pressure on the Hamas government, Fatah declared that Hamas was responsible for the international isolation of the PA and the worsening economic situation. Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades also increased attacks against Israel, attempting to undermine Hamas' status in the resistance. Fatah's obstructionist actions made it evident that it believed the Hamas government would collapse. And to regain power more quickly Fatah was working to expedite Hamas' failure rather than undertaking internal reform.

Hamas' response to these growing domestic challenges to its authority and international isolation was two-fold. It blamed the failings of the PA on Israel, the United States, and Fatah. Seyam declared, "If this government fails due to internal pressures supported by outside forces, then we will turn the tables on all of them."³⁹⁷ Hamas also threatened to dissolve the PA, and created an extralegal military force responsible to Hamas' leadership and not to the government.³⁹⁸ Meshal said in April 2006, "If the Authority is unable to support the resistance, then to hell with the Authority -- we don't need it."³⁹⁹

The international isolation of Hamas has not only increased the polarization within Palestinian society itself, it has also aggravated the rivalry between Fatah and Hamas, and increased tensions in an already very weak security environment. Whether the Palestinian population will ultimately blame Hamas or the international community for the deteriorating situation remains to be seen.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Erlanger, 2006

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Yaghi, Muhammad, "The Growing Anarchy in the Palestinian Territories," May 16, 2006, The Washington Institute, Policy Watch #1103

At its core, the rivalry between Hamas and Fatah is simply one over power. After months of international isolation and growing unrest in the Occupied Territories, Abbas decided to dismiss the entire Hamas administration, dissolve parliament and call early presidential and parliamentary polls. The Hamas leadership of course responded to this announcement with strong protest, describing the plan as a "coup d'état against the will of the Palestinian people".⁴⁰⁰ The threats against the Hamas government intensified unrest, particularly within the Gaza Strip, to levels not witnessed for many years. During a cabinet session in Gaza in December 2006, Haniya declared Abbas' election call both "unconstitutional" and one designed to "cause confusion".⁴⁰¹ It was also clear that Israel was eager to aggravate the conflict between the two factions so that it could place the blame on them for the collapse of the Palestinian resistance and the failure to create a Palestinian state.

After the war against Lebanon in 2006, Washington signaled its willingness to revive the peace process with "moderate forces" on the condition that "extremist forces" are sidelined.⁴⁰² This is a part of an American-Israeli strategy to divide and rule, to set Palestinian against Palestinian. But the differences between the Palestinian factions and parties are about means not aims. It does not make very much sense to separate moderates from extremists. All of the factions, including Hamas, are prepared to negotiate a peaceful settlement on the basis of Israel's withdrawal to pre-1967 borders, the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem, and the resolution of the refugee problem in accordance with UN Resolution 194 of 1949. Israeli propaganda reinforces the idea that Hamas' aims reflect a deep-seated Arab desire to 'drive the Jews into the sea'.

⁴⁰⁰ Factional Rivalry Intensifies After Palestinian President Calls for Early Elections, Global Insight, 20 December 2006, <http://www.globalinsight.com/SDA/SDADetail7828.htm>

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Al-Ahram Weekly, Hassan Nafaa, 'Defining a Coherent Position', 19-25 October, 2006.

And yet, Israel has yet to respond to the Arab peace initiative and absolutely refuses to entertain the idea of withdrawing to its 1967 borders⁴⁰³.

If this analysis of the situation proves to be true, the seizure of Gaza by Hamas and its separation from the West Bank will be a setback for the goals of establishing a Palestinian state (in the short to mid term). From the Israeli perspective, the division among Hamas and Fatah and the political and territorial division of the Palestinian Territories amongst the two factions will allow Israel to control them better. Fatah already enjoys 'preferred choice' status by the Israeli government and both the U.S. and the EU. Moreover, Israel is now targeting the Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigades inside the West Bank, without any disapproval from President Abbas and his government. Hamas, on the other hand, is being treated as a "rogue" element by Israel, the U.S. and the EU. They are attempting to force Hamas to renounce its armed struggle by isolating and boycotting it (along with the Palestinian population living in Gaza). Should Hamas again resort to violence, Israel would have more room to maneuver and retaliate (considering that it will only have to launch its attacks on the Gaza Strip controlled by Hamas). On the other hand, President Abbas and the PLO are already receiving full political and financial support by Israel and the international community.

Hamas has been maneuvered into a corner by all sides. Gaza's economic indicators are deteriorating and poverty is increasing exponentially (according to the IMF and the World Bank "more than 75 percent of households in Gaza were considered poor by end-2006")⁴⁰⁴. This in turn means Hamas is facing increasing dissatisfaction among the Gazan residents. Hamas faces a difficult choice if the international political and financial boycott continues. It will be unable to rule by itself

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ IMF-WB, West Bank and Gaza: Economic Developments in 2006 – A First Assessment, March 2007.

and may have to seek reconciliation with PLO/Fatah on the one hand and Israel and the international community on the other by accepting Fatah/PLO's authority, Israel's right to exist and renouncing its armed struggle. However, this will most likely alienate its more radical Palestinian constituencies. Besides, the Israeli government and Fatah/PLO show no signs of wanting to negotiate with Hamas for now. They still consider it to be too strong politically, enjoying wide popular support. Most likely Fatah /PLO and Israel will wait until Hamas is weakened enough politically, economically and militarily to accept Fatah/PLO rule before engaging in any talks.

Israel, for its part, may choose to invade Gaza and overthrow the Hamas government. As Tzipi Livni stated, her primary goal if she wins the February 2009 election is to overthrow Hamas. "The Hamas government in Gaza must be toppled, the means to do this must be military, economic and diplomatic."⁴⁰⁵ Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud party leader and Livni's main rival, made similar statements, vowing that "In the long-term, we will have to topple the Hamas regime...In the short-term ... there are a wide range of possibilities, from doing nothing to doing everything, meaning to conquer Gaza."⁴⁰⁶ Israel appears to be following the same pattern it followed in its 'demonization' of Arafat, placing full blame on him for his failure to 'stop the terrorism'. Now Hamas is the scapegoat. But what the Israeli authorities appear to be conveniently forgetting is that Hamas is not the only organization resisting Israeli occupation. In fact, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for most of the rocket fire sent off into Israel since the end of the truce in December 2008.

Only time will tell which lessons have been learned. Hopefully one lesson will be Israel's recognition that destroying the Palestinians' capabilities to resist does not

⁴⁰⁵ Al Jazeera, "Livni Vows to Topple Hamas", 22 December 2008.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

mean their motivation has also been destroyed. To eliminate the struggle against the Israeli occupation ultimately requires addressing and lessening the Palestinians' grievances as a population. The Palestinian population's support for suicide attacks and armed resistance against Israel is likely to diminish when concrete progress is made in achieving at least some of the fundamental goals that both the factions and those supporting them share. In the end, to stop the armed resistance, Israeli authorities must consider providing the Palestinian people with the same freedoms, opportunities and civil rights as Israeli citizens.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Written by Israeli human rights advocate, Lea Tsemel, on September 6, 1999, the day of the victorious Israel Supreme Court decision against torture.

An Open Letter to "Abu Jerry"⁴⁰⁷

So what do you say?

What was it like, that moment at 10 o'clock in the morning when you turned off the deafening music, removed the sacks from all the bowed heads, unlocked the handcuffs, releasing the swollen wrists, and raised up dozens of distorted bodies from those awkward stools? How was it when you detached the chains hanging from the ceiling and allowed the stretched bodies to collapse and relax. Did you abruptly stop the "shaking" or did you finish one last farewell round? Did your boot complete its push on an exposed belly or did it retreat?

It was as much a total surprise for me as for you. We were sitting in the Supreme Court, not believing, as Judge Matza read out the nine judges' unanimous decision: "We are making the order-to-show-cause final for all conditions and in all situations. Torture and any humiliating position are forbidden. 'Shabah' is forbidden. The frog position is forbidden. The sack on the head is forbidden. Forbidden. Forbidden. Forbidden."

To my ears the decision played like pure beautiful music. The Court was reading the correct, perfect, obvious decision and I felt as if it had just recreated the Bill of Human Rights. Every argument we had researched, any claim we had brought for years and years, all found their natural place in this decision. I was looking at you and saw you

⁴⁰⁷ http://abbc.net/historia/zionism/tsemel_torture.html

sitting there, pale and abandoned, as if you had lost your whole world in an instant. And when you came out into the hallway, it was not with the usual self-assured step and cocky gait.

We both remember all the long sessions, case after case, when you explained that, "it's not exactly torture" and "for the security of the state" and, moreover, "secret material" and "in camera" and with good intentions". You have surely counted in your mind all those times when you succeeded in convincing -- just like the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood--that the deafening music is only so that the detainee does not hear and the stinking sack is only so that he does not see and the chains only so that he does not move and the beatings only so that he does not try to riot and the bruises are from falling down the stairs and, anyway, he has a long record and there's no alternative...

All of a sudden, in a well-argued decision in front of your eyes, 32 years of security heroism are turned into 32 years of forbidden criminality.

Like the spoiled and admired child you were, you reacted spontaneously, "Good! So we'll give the keys to the judges and we'll see them carrying out the interrogations." Was it out of a need to comfort you when I said that there are other dangerous places in the world and other interrogators who achieve breakthroughs with security offenders? You have not invented the war against terror; it is possible to handle interrogations to reach your objectives while safeguarding the law. I reminded you of all the examples we brought to the Court when offences, no less severe, were solved without the use of your brutal means.

But you were not convinced. Together with losing your "special permission", you have also lost your grandiose self-esteem. Have you asked for the support of the politicians, the interpreters and the security experts? Or were they the ones who initiated the cries to the media, shrieking, "alas and woe!"

Have you noticed how all your argumentation has been turned upside down? Allow me to remind you: until 1987, you totally denied the existence of torture. The

Palestinians, and moreover the self-hating Jews, were just defaming you. When the Landau Commission lit the darkness of your interrogation room with a penlight, you were forced to admit that there is moderate use of physical pressure and to promise that you would stop lying in the courts and in the interrogation committees. And then, over the years, as the transparency grew, you admitted, little by little, that there are "special means" and even the use of reasonable force, and after an accident or two you even admitted to the "shaking". And then you fired the interrogator who kicked too much. But you did not go overboard: you only sentenced to internal disciplinary censure the one who choked to death the detainee... who the hell knew that he was asthmatic? After too many on-the-job accidents, you set down regulations, you asked for and received government coverage and you entered the era of bureaucratized torture. And then, in spite of everything going so well, all those human rights organizations and those heathens who deny security is above all, pounced on you with huge floodlights and have exposed all the tied-up and the crawling and the hanged and the bent. In the glare of this total exposure you evaporate and dissolve like fungus that has no existence but in humid darkness.

All of a sudden, you are the one who calls, "help!" All of a sudden the heads of the security services for generations-- the professional torture deniers-- are shouting from the rooftops like addicts in crisis. "Bring us our tools, give us back the rack and the tongs. We cannot live without them." Aren't you ashamed?

Relax. I genuinely believe that you can relax. Hang a sign in the security services (Shabak) dining room that says, "torture and ill-treatment are unconditionally forbidden." And start working like any professional secret service interrogator. It is not such a shame to carry out interrogation like professional police. So what if you have to employ intelligence in the interrogation? Remember how you managed to crack the Jewish underground without having them pass through your torture chamber?

Think of all the advantages:

-When Roni or Dana ask you, what did you do at work today, Daddy, you will be able to tell them that there was a battle of wits and you cracked the case, solved it, and can look into their eyes and forget the image of washing blood from your hands at the sink.

-And when you caress your wife in the evening, your own words to A.K., tied and humiliated on the ground since the morning, will not echo in your ears: "Does your wife suck you? How are her breasts?" as he is sobbing, sobbing at your feet.

-And think of the many thousands of guards, soldiers, policewomen and men, doctors and judges who you turned into secret accomplices to your sins. You forced them to tie up and take down, push down and wakeup, heal and prepare the hundreds of thousands of detainees in every last one of your institutions.

They are free of you today.

And especially think how you are getting rid of the glances. You remember all those brown eyes, begging for some mercy, crying with pain, that said that we will do whatever you want and confess to whatever you say. You cannot forget that you have always known that at a certain moment they will have a different gaze. Just in the blink of an eye, you read their promise for revenge. You remember how many times a quick shiver and a hesitation crept through you when those eyes told you that this humiliation and pain will never be forgotten and will blow up in your face one day. And you saw, deep within yourself, that the next bomb is one that you have created with your own hands.

Lea Tsemel, Attorney

Public Committee Against Torture in Israel

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Appendix 2

Testimonials of Intercepted Suicide Bombers⁴⁰⁸:**Testimonial of Murad Tawalbeh
(translated from Arabic into Hebrew into German)****Aussage von Murad Tawalbeh
(übersetzt aus dem Arabisch ins Hebraisch ins Deutsch)**

<u>Mitteilung der:</u>		<u>israel. Polizei</u>	
<u>Ausweis Nr.</u> 921869558	<u>Vorname</u> Murad	<u>Familienname</u> Tawalbeh	
<u>Familienstand</u> Ledig	<u>Geschlecht</u> maennlich	<u>Religion</u> Moslem	
<u>Geburtsdatum</u> 27/1/1983	<u>Geburtsort</u> Jenin		
<u>Adresse</u> Fluechtlingslager von Jenin	<u>Arbeitsplatz</u> Gefaengniswaerter in dem Gefaengnis der palaest. National- behoerde in Jenin		
<u>Name des Vaters</u> Ahmad, Sohn von Mohammed	<u>Adresse des Vaters</u> Fluechtlingslager, Jenin		
<u>Datum</u> 23.7.01	<u>Uhrzeit</u> 11:20	<u>Ort</u> Kischon	<u>Vernehmer</u> Made Harb, Nr.45666

Hiermit ist die Uebersetzung der Aussage des o.g. aus dem Arabisch ins Hebraeisch, nachdem der Verdaechtigte die Verdaechtigungen und die Warnungen verstanden und die Aussage in Original unterschrieben hat.

Ich habe die mir vorgeworfenen Verdaechtigungen verstanden, nachdem du sie mir ins Arabisch uebersetzt hast. Die Verdaechtigungen sind richtig. Die Warnung habe ich verstanden, so dass ich nichts sagen muss. Jedes Etwas, was ich sage, koennte als Beweis gegen mich verwendet werden und das Schweigen koennte die Beweise gegen mich verstaerken. Ich habe auch verstanden, dass ich das Recht habe, die Aussage eigenhaendig auf Arabisch zu schreiben. Ich will dieses Recht in Anspruch nehmen und die Aussage auf Arabisch eigenhaendig schreiben.

Frage: wo kommst du genau her und was machst du ?

Antwort: ich bin Murad Ahmad Mohammed Tawalbeh von Jenin's Fluechtlingslager (im folgenden F.lager , E.S.), ledig und wohne mit

⁴⁰⁸ Translation from Hebrew into German kindly funded by the University of Vienna

meinen Eltern im Jenin's F.lager. Ich habe die Geschwister: Zareefeh, Maisoon, Mohammed, Mahmoud, Raaed, Alaa, Khaleel und Abdallah. Ich arbeite z.Z. als Polizist in der palaest. Nationalbehoerde in Jenin. Ich nehme z.Z. an einem Kurs fuer Polizisten in Jenin teil und nach Beendigung des Kurses, haette ich als Gefaengniswaerter in einem Zivilgefaengnis der palaest. Nationalbehoerde (im folgenden PNB, E.S.) arbeiten sollen. Aber ich wurde gestern verhaftet, bevor ich den Kurs beenden kann. Nur Gott weiss, wann ich aus dem Gefaengnis raus komme.

Frage: wann bist du in die Organisation des Jihad Islame beigetreten, und wer hat dich angeworben ?

Antwort: mein Bruder, Mahmoud, hat mich zu Jihad Islame vor einem Monat angeworben.

Frage: warum hat dein Bruder dich zu dieser Organisation angeworben?

Antwort: mein Bruder hat mich ins Jihad Islame angeworben, damit ich einen Selstmord-Anschalg in Israel mache.

Frage: warum hat sich dein Bruder, Mahmoud, an dich angewandt, damit du einen S.M.Anschlag in Israel machst?

Antwort: mein Bruder Mahmoud hat sich an mich angewandt, damit ich einen S.M.Anschlag in Isarel mache, da ich nach mich dem Mord meines Freundes, Amjad Azmi Hosnija, durch die israel. Armee fuer einen Anschlag entschieden habe. Waehrend einer Auseinandersetzung mit der isarel. Armee am 25/11/00 am Checkpoint von Jalameh wurde mein Freund Amjad Hosnija getoetet. Ich entschied mich einen S.M.Anschlag in Haifa zu machen, damit ich mich wegendes Mordes an meinen Freund an Juden raechen kann. Darueberhinaus hat sich in dem F.L.lager nach dem o.g. Mord ein Geruecht verbreitet, dass ich fuer einen S.M.Anschlag bereit bin. Und deswegen ist mein Bruder, Mahmoud, an mich vor einer Woche angetreten und hat mich gefragt, ob ich noch ernst bin einen S.M.Anschlag gegen Juden innerhalb Israel zu machen. Ich antwortete ihm, dass ich ernst bin und ich bin jeder Zeit bereit. Mein Bruder Mahmoud, hat mich zu meinem Handy, Nr. 052-984929 angerufen und bat mich zu seinem Haus im F.L.Lager zu kommen. Dieses Handy, Nokia 5000, hatte ich von Hassan Alsanoure fuer 400 Schekel gekauft. H. Alsanoure ist 31 Jahre alt, verheiratet, wird als Abu Mussa'b gennant und er ist der Partner meines Brueders Mahmoud in dem Kleidungsgeschaeft in dem Grossmarkt in Jenin. Als ich bei meinem Bruder angekommen bin, habe ich mich uberrascht, Thabet Merdawe zu sehen. Thabet Merdawe ist 28 Jahre alt, aus Arrabah, wohnt z.Z. in Jenin, aber ich weiss nicht genau wo. Thabet Merdawe ist frisch verheiratet, und ist mir bekannt, dass er geanauso mein Bruder dem militaer. Fluegel von Jihad Islame angeh hoeren. Ich moechte weiter hinzufuegen, dass mein Brueder Mahmoud und Th. Merdawe von den Israelis gesucht werden. Th. Merdawe ist deswegen nach Jenin umgezogen, da die Stadt unter der Verantwortung der palaest. Nationalbehoerde steht.

Frage: seit wann weisst du, dass dein Bruder und Merdawe von den Isarelis gesucht werden?

Antwort: mir ist vor zwei Monaten bekannt , dass mein Bruder gesucht ist und mir ist vor vier Monaten bekannt, dass Merdawe gesucht ist.

Frage: was wollte dein Bruder nach deiner Ankunft in seiner Wohnung und worueber habt ihr diskutiert?

Antwort: nach meiner Ankunft in Mahmoud's Haus haben Mahmoud und Merdawe angefangen, ueber das Paradies und die Jungfrauen zu sprechen. Wer als Maertyrer und fuer Gott stirbt, verdient zweiundziebzig Jungfrauen. Sie haben angefangen, Versen aus dem Koraan zu lesen, die Maertyrer loben, und dass der Maertyrer Buerge fuer seine Eltern am Tag des Gerichts. Das Gespraech in dem Mahmoud's Haus dauerte vier Stunden in Anwesenheit und Beteiligung Th. Merdawe. Wir haben uns verabschiedet und vereinbart, dass wir uns morgen in Mahmoud's Haus wiedertreffen. Das zweite Gespraech fand in Mahmoud's Haus an einem Dienstag statt, es dauerte anderthalb Stunde und hier diskutierten wir, Mahmoud, Merdawe und ich, ueber den Tod, Gott und die Jungfrauen. Am Mittwoch habe ich doch einen Anruf von minem Bruder Mahmoud erwartet, aber er hat mich nicht angerufen, da an diesem Mittwoch, soweit ich mich erinnern kann, Jihad aus Alhaschimieh (neben Jenin, E.S.) festgenommen wurde. Jihad sollte einen S.M.Anschlag in der israel. Stadt Affulah machen.

Frage: kannst du dich genau erinnern, wann die relegioesen Sitzungen zwischen deinem Bruder Mahmoud, Thabet Merdawe und dir begonnen haben?

Antwort: ich erinnere mich nicht an genaue Daten, aber ich kann mich erinnern, dass die Sitzungen und die Gespraechе dauerhaft waren, und sie waren vor der Festnahme von Jihad. Nach der Festnahme von Jihad habe ich gewusst, dass er dem Jihad Islame angehört. Deswegen wandte ich mich an meinen Bruder Mahmoud und fragte ihn, ob er und Merdawe, Jihad zum Verueben eines S.M.Anschlags in Affulah geschickt haben. Mein Bruder hat dies bejaht und sagte, dass er und Merdawe Jihad zum Verueben eines S.M.Anschlags in Affulah geschickt haben. Aber mein Bruder hat mir keine Einzelheiten ueber die Sprengstoffladung erzaehlt, die mit Jihad erfasst wurde.

Frage: wann hast du letztens dein Bruder und Merdawe getroffen ?

Antwort: letezttes mal war am vorigen Freitag. Das war das letzte Treffen, obwohl wir uns fast taeglich in den letzten zwei Wochen getroffen haben, um den S.M.Anschlag vorzubereiten. Ich moechte hinzufuegen, dass wir in jeder Sitzung ueber Maertyrertod, Jungfrauen im Paradies gesprochen haben. In der letzten Sitzung am vorigen Freitag habe ich ihnen gesagt, dass ich jederzeit bereit bin, einen S.M.Anschlag zu

machen. Mein Bruder Mahmoud und Merdawe sagten mir, ich soll mich in die kommenden Tage fuer diesen Anschlag vorbereiten.

Frage: habt ihr alle, dein Bruder, Merdawe und du, ueber den Anschlag entschieden, den du begehen solltest ?

Antwort: bis zum letzten Freitag haben wir keinen Termin und keinen Otr vereinbart. Als ich vor zwei Tagen mit meinem Freund, Thaaer Abu Kamel, in Jenin's F.lager war, hat mich mein Bruder Mahmoud gegen 18:00 Uhr angerufen und bat mich zum Haus des Alhaj Ali Zaffoure dringend zu kommen. Thaaer Abu Kamet ist 19 Jahre alt und arbeitet als Polizist in dem Gefaengnis von Jenin. Alhaj Ali Zaffoure ist 36 Jahre alt, verheiratet und besitzt eine Schlosserei in dem Jenin's F.Lager. Ich habe mich von meinem Freund Thaaer verabschiedet, ohne ihm logischerweise zu sagen, wohin ich gehe. Ich bin zum Haus des Alhaj Zaffoure gegangen. Dort war mein Bruder Mahmoud, aber er hat das Haus verlassen. In einem Zimmer, das im linken Fluegel des Zaffoure Hauses liegt, habe ich ein Testament geschrieben. Das Testament habe ich auf ein Papier geschrieben, das Alhaj Zaffoure mir gegeben hat. In dem Testament habe meiner Mutter und meinen Bruedern mitgeteilt, dass ich die Absicht habe, einen S.M.Anschlag zu machen, und ich habe sie gebeten, Geduld nach der Trennung zu haben. Nachdem ich das Testament fertig geschrieben habe, habe ich es vor einer Videokamera neben einem Koraan, Gewehr M-16, vorgelesen. Scheich Zaffoure hat mich mit der Kamera fotografiert. Alles habe ich gegen 19:00 Uhr beendet und dann ging ich nach Hause im F.lager zurueck.

Frage: habt ihr, Mahmoud, Merdawe und du, wie der S.M.Anschlag ausgefuehrt wird ?

Antwort: ja, wir haben entschieden, dass ich den Anschlag mittels eines mit Sprengstoff galldenen Guertels mache. Den Guertel habe ich erstmal in der dritten Sitzung im Haus meines Bruders Mahmoud gesehen. Der Guertel war damals bereit. Ich habe keine Ahnung, ob mein Bruder Mahmoud und Merdawe den Guertel vorbereitet haben. Ich habe das Haus des Alhaj Zaffoure verlassen. Nachdem ich den Moschee im Jenin's F.Lager nach dem Abendsgebet gegen 22:00 Uhr verlassen habe, hat mich Merdawe angerufen und bat mich, die Hosen zu bringen und ihn neben der UNRWA- Schule im F.Lager zu treffen. Gemeint ist der Sprengstoffguertel. Da der S.S.Guertel ca. 5-6 kg. wiegt, und ich diesen nicht vor die Augen der Einwohner tragen kann, bin ich ohne den Geurtel zum Treffen gegangen. Als ich mich mit Merdawe getroffen habe, war Merdawe in einem gelben Taxi, dessen Fahrer aus dem F.Lager kommt. Der Taxifahrer ist ca. 29 jahre alt , aber sein Name ist mir nicht bekannt. Er arbeitet in der Taxistation Alqassam oder Alsafaa. In dem ganzem Lager gibt es kein aehnliches Taxi.

Frage: kannst du mir den o.g. Taxifahrer beschreiben ?

Antwort: ja, er ist ca. 29 Jahre alt, ca.180 gross, staemmig, braunes Gesicht, schwarzes Haar nach hinten gekaemmt, ohne Schnauzbart oder Bart. Er hatte ein Handy gleich meins, Typ Nokia 5000. Ich habe aber seine Handynummer nicht. Von dort aus sind wir, Merdawe und ich mit dem o.g. Taxi zu meinem Bruder Mahmoud gefahren. Dort habe ich den Sprengstoffguertel von Mahmoud's Faru bekommen, die ueber den Versteck wusste. Sie hat aber logischerweise nicht gewusst, dass ich den S.S.Guertel in Israel platzen soll. Nachdem ich den S.S.Guertel genommen habe, sind wir mit dem Taxi zur Taxistation in Jenin gefahren, um dort einen jungen Mann aus Kufr A'nan abzuholen. Er hat doch auf uns gewartet. Von dort aus sind wir zum Haus von Alhaj Ali Alsaffoure in Jenin gefahren. Nach unserer Ankunft dort sind wir zu Dritt ausgestiegen: Merdawe, der den S.S.Guertel getragen hat, der junge Mann aus Kufr A'nan und ich. Danach hat uns der Taxifahrer verlassen. Zum Haus von Alhaj Ali sind wir gegen 23:00 Uhr angekommen. In dem Haus von Alhaj Ali sassen wir zu viert: Alhaj Ali, Merdawe, der junge Mann aus Kufr A'nan und ich. Wir diskutierten ueber den Ausfuehrungsplan des S.M.Anschlages, den ich machen wuerde. Der Plan sieht so aus : An demselben Abend soll ich in unserem Haus schlafen.Um 4:00 Uhr morgens soll ich zum Haus von Alhaj Ali gehen, und dort den S.S.Guertel tragen. Danach soll das o.g. Taxi mich abholen und weiter nach Kufr A'nan fahren, um den o.g. jungen Mann abzuholen. Der junge Mann hatte die Aufgabe, mich durch israelische Militaercheckpoints umleitende Wege nach Um-Elfahem mit gem S.S.Guertel zu bringen. Wenn wir in Um-Elfahem ankommen sollen, sollte er mich zum Taxi bringen, das nach Haifa oder nach Affulah faehrt. Und habe ich die Wahl, den S.M.Anschlag entweder in Haifa oder in Affulah zu machen. Nach dem Plan sollten zwei Wagen auf uns in Um-Elfahem warten. In dem ersten Wagen sollen ein Fahrer und Nebenfahrer sein. Dieser Wagen soll erst vor uns fahren, um den Weg zu pruefen und uns zu benachrichtigen, ob es auf dem Weg Checkpoints gibt. Ich soll in dem zweiten Wagen fahren, und der S.S.Guertel dabeisein, bis ich an dem Ort ankomme, in dem ich den S.M.Anschlag begehen soll. Der Ort soll mit Soldaten voll sein. Der Ort sollte in den folgenden Staedten sein: Afffulah, Haifa, Benyamina, in Majedo- Gebiet und in einem Ort, an seinen Namen kann ich mich z.Z. nicht erinnern. Aber ich weiss, dass dieser Ort ca. 70 km von Um-Elfahem entfernt. Nachdem wir den Plan abgeschlossen haben, habe ich das Alhaj-Haus verlassen, und dann bin ich nach Hause zum schlafen gegangen. Bevor ich nach Hause ging, bin ich bei meinem Freund Thaaer Abu Alkamel vorbeigegangen, und blieb bei ihm bis zwei Uhr nachts. Gegen 4:00 Uhr morgens weckte mich mein Bruder Mahmoud und bat mich zum Alhaj-Haus zu kommen. Und ich bin sofort hingegangen. In dem Alhaj's Haus haben mein Bruder Mahmoud und Alhaj Ali mich mit dem S.S.Guertel bekleidet und sie haben mir erklart, wie ich duch einen in der Hosentasche gesteckten Betriebknopf den S.S.Guertel platzen kann. Dieselbe Hose trage ich auch heute. (der Verdaechtige weist auf eine hellblaue Jeanshose hin, mit vier Taschen, zwei vorne und zwei hinten

– der Vernehmer). Nachdem ich mit dem S.S.Guertel bekleidet wurde, habe ich mein Gebet gamacht. Danach hat Alhaj Ali fuer mich ein Taxi bestellt. Das Taxi hat mich zum Kufr A'nin gebracht. Gegen 6:15 holte mich der Junge aus Kufr A'nin ab. Vor dort sind wir durch einen Umleitweg bis zu einem Abfallplatz gefahren. Das Taxi ist nach Jenin zurueckgefahren. Wir warteten ca. Viertelstunde unter den Baeumen, damit wir feststellen koennen, dass es keine Militaercheckpoints gibt. Und nachdem wir dies feststellten, sind wir zu Fuss Richtung Um-Elfahem gegangen. Um Elfahem liegt ca. ein halbes Kilometer entfernt von dem Austeigeort. Der Junge aus Kufr A'nin sollte ca. 20 Meter vor mich gehen. Nach der Abmachung sollte er sich zu mir umdrehen, falls er Militaercheckpoints sieht, damit wir Versteckmassnahmen ergreifen koennen. Wir haben auch verabredet, dass er mir in Um Elfahem auf die beiden Wagen hinweist, die mich abholen sollen. Aber ich habe mich in Um Elfahem ueberrascht, dass keine Wagen auf mich warteten. Der Junge aus Kufr A'nin sagte mir, ich soll alleingehen und den S.M.Anschlag machen. Nachdem wir in der Taxistation angekommen sind, und ich feststellte, dass keine Wagen auf mich warten, sagte mir der Junge, ich habe zwei Wahlmoeglichkeiten: den S.M.Anschlag in Haifa oder in Affulah zu machen. Ich habe die Stadt Haifa gewaehlt.

Frage: warum hast du die Stadt Haifa als Anschlagsort gewaehlt ?

Antwort: die Stadt Haifa habe ich gewaehlt, da es sich um eine Grossstadt handelt und man kann sich leicht verstecken.
Nachdem ich mich etnschieden habe, den Anschlag in Haifa zu machen, hat mich der Junge aus A'nin zur Taxistation gebracht. Er hat mich auf ein bestimmtes Taxi hingewiesen, indem er seinen Hut abgenommen hat. Ich bin gegen 7:00 Uhr mit einem mit zehn Sitzen besetzten Sammeltaxi, an dessen Typ mich z.Z. nicht erinnern kann, gefahren.

Frage: kannst du mir das Taxi, mit dem du von Um Elfahem nach Haifa gefahren bist, beschreiben?

Antwort: ja, ein Wagen fuer zehn Leute, ich kann mich an Typ nicht erinnern, Ford- oder VW- Transit, weisse Farbe, ein Grosswagen, neben dem Fahrer sind zwei Passagiersitze, in dem hinteren Teil sind Sitzreihen, die erste Reihe mit zwei Sitzen, die zweite Reihe ist auch mit zwei Sitzen und die letzte Reihe mit drei Sitzen. Ich moechte hinzufuegen, dass die Passagiere in den hinteren Teil durch eine Schiebetuer eingestiegen sind. Der Wagen hat blaue Gardinen an den Waenden und an den Fenstern. In dem Taxi gibt's auch ein Funkgeraet und Quittungsapparat. Der Taxifahrer hatte ein Handy, Typ Starteck.

Frage: warst du allein in dem Wagen oder waren auch andere Passagiere?

Antwort: der Wagen war voll und wir waren zehn Leute ausser dem Fahrer. Ich bemerkte, dass alle Passagiere Arbeiter aus Westbank sind, aber ich kenne keinen von ihnen.

Frage: wie sieht der Taxifahrer aus, mit dem du von Um Elfahem nach Haifa gefahren bist?

Antwort: er ist ca. 45 Jahre alt, duenn, hat dunkel- graues Haar, mit normalem Schnauzer, d.h. nicht breit und nicht schmal, hellbraunes Gesicht soweit ich mich erinnern kann, braune oder gruene Augen. Ich moechte hinzufuegen, dass der Taxifahrer waehrend der Fahrt von Um Elfahem nach Haifa ein Telefongespraech bekommen hat, in dem er nach dem naechsten Checkpoints fragt. Ich habe von ihm gehoert, dass es ein Checkpoint neben Aljalame gibt. Ein hinten sitzender Passagier sagte dem Fahrer, fahr' rechts, dort gibt's nichts. Und wirklich haben wir keine Checkpoints auf dem Weg gefunden. Gegen 7:45 sind wir in Haifa angekommen. In der Einfahrt zu Haifa bat ich den Taxifahrer, mich an den Flohmarkt neben dem „Alesteqlal“ Moschee abzusetzen. Und dort bin ich mit zwei Passagieren ausgestiegen. Vom Moscheeplatz bin ich zu Fuss Richtung des Markts gegangen und dort habe ich eine ca. 150 Menschen zaehlende Ansammlung in dem Markt, insbesondere um die Verkaeufer, gesehen. Die groesste Ansammlung war um den Fischverkaeufer, ca. 20 Menschen. Als ich diese grosse Ansammlung um den Fischverkaeufer gesehen habe, griffte ich zum Betriebsknopf des S.S.Guertels, aber ich habe sie zurueckgezogen. In der letzten Sekunde habe ich mich entschieden, den S.M.Anschlag in der Ansammlung um den Fischverkaeufer nicht zu machen.

Frage: warum hast du dich nicht gesprengt?

Antwort: nachdem ich zum Betriebsknopf des S.S.Guertel zugegriffen habe, habe ich Angst gefuehlt, und viele Gedanken und Bilder meiner Mutter und Schwester haben mich ueberschwommen. Und deswegen habe ich mich entschieden, mich nicht an diesen Menschen zu sprengen. In demselben Augenblick habe ich mich dieser Menschen erbarmt, da sie mir nicht schlechtes angetan haben. Nachdem ich mich etnschieden habe, mich nicht in dieser Ansammlung zu sprengen, wollte ich den S.S.Guertel loswerden. Deswegen habe ich den Markt verlassen und mich ca. 300 m vom Markt entfernt. Ich ging zum Ort, wo Arbeiter aus der Westbank setzen. Ich bin nochmal zum Flohmarkt gegangen, um mich in der Ansammlung zu sprengen. Nochmal habe ich zum Betriebsknopf des S.S.Guertel zugegriffen und diesmal habe ich wieder Angst und Reue gefuehlt. Und deswegen habe ich mich etnschieden, den S.S.Guertel nicht zu sprengen, sondern ihn in einem Ort loszuwerden. Und das war gegen 8:30 Uhr morgens. Ich entfernte mich vom Markt und fing ich an, einen verlassenenen Platz zu suchen, um den S.S.Guertel zu werfen und ihn

loszuwerden. Während der Suche erinnerte ich mich an einen verlassenen Haus im Hadar (Stadtteil von Haifa, E.S.).

Frage: wie bist du zu dem verlassenen Haus im Hadar angekommen?

Antwort: zu Fuss. Ich bin vom Flohmarkt durch die nach Hadar bringenden Treppen hingegangen. Das verlassene Haus kenne ich gut, da ich in der Stadt Haifa gearbeitet habe. Als ich in dem verlassenen Haus angekommen bin, habe ich dort einige Arbeiter aus der Westbank gesehen. Ich habe sie gefragt, ob ein gewisser Mohammed aus Jenin unter ihnen sei. Sie antworteten, dass keiner aus Jenin unter ihnen ist.

Frage: warum hast du nach einem gewissen Mohammed aus Jenin gefragt und gesucht? Solltest du einen gewissen Mohammed in Haifa vor dem Anschlag treffen?

Antwort: ich habe danach gefragt, damit die Arbeiter mich beim Ein- und Ausgehen nicht verdächtigen. Ich habe diesen Namen erfunden. Nachdem ich mich mit den Arbeitern unterhalten habe, und ich habe den S.S.Gürtel noch am Körper, bin ich vom zweiten zum ersten Stock gegangen. Und dort habe ich das blaue Hemd, das ich im Moment trage, ausgezogen. Unter diesem Hemd hatte ich ein zweites gelbes T-Shirt. Und darunter hatte ich ein rotes T-Shirt für Girls. Und unter all diesen hatte ich den S.S.Gürtel.

Frage: warum hast du alle drei angezogen?

Antwort: damit ich dick aussehe, damit ich die Finger des S.S.Gürtels verstecke und damit ich keinen Verdacht erzeuge.

Frage: kannst du mir beschreiben, woraus der S.S.Gürtel gebaut ist?

Antwort: der S.S.Gürtel ist gebaut aus: Ledergürtel in brauner Farbe, 10 cm breit, auf dem braunen Gürtel sind ca. 15 Sprengrohre, jedes Rohr ist ca. 3,5 cm Durchmesser, jedes Rohr ist durch einen Faden mit dem Gürtel verbunden, aus jedem Rohr gehen zwei weiße Stromfäden aus, die auch zu zwei Batterien verbunden sind, jede Batterie ist viereckig, 9 Volt. Aus den mit den Rohren verbundenen Batterien gehen Fäden raus, die miteinander verbunden sind und sie alle mit dem Betriebsknopf wieder verbunden sind, der in der vorderen Hosentasche war, damit der S.S.Gürtel gesprengt werden kann. Der Betriebsknopf besteht aus zwei Teilen: der untere Teil ist schwarz und der obere Teil ist rot. Der Betriebsknopf hat ON und OFF Stellen. Ich möchte hinzufügen, dass jeder mit den Sprengkörpern verbundene Stromfaden aus zwei weissfarbigen Sehnen besteht.

Frage: wo hast du genau den S.S.Gürtel angezogen und wer hat dich bekleidet?

Antwort: den S.S.Gurtel habe ich in dem Alhaj's Haus in Anwesenheit meines Bruders Mahmoud. Unter dem Gurtel habe ich ein weisses T-Schirt angezogen, und darauf haben sie mich mit dem S.S.Guertel bekleidet. Den S.S.Guertel haben sie mit einem weissen Faden nach hinten verbunden, damit er festbleibt. Danach haben sie den S.S.Guertel mit zwei Pflasterbaendern verbunden, damit er gestaerkt wird und damit die Sprengstoffroehre (= S.S.Roehre, E. S.) versteckt werden koennen. Auf den S.S.Guertel haben sie mich mit einem rotem Maedchen-T-Schirt bekleidet und darauf ein gelbes T-Schirt und darauf ein blaues, das ich heute noch anziehe.

Frage: wie hast du den S.S.Guertel losgeworden und wo hast du den weggeworfen?

Antwort: zuerst habe ich die drei T-Schirts ausgezogen: das blaue, das gelbe und das rote. Danach habe ich die Pflasterbaende runtergeholt. Den S.S.Guertel habe ich von hinten nach vorne umgedreht, um die Faeden zu loesen. Dies habe ich im ersten Stock des verlassenen Hauses gemacht. Nachdem ich den S.S.Guertel runtergeholt habe, habe ich wieder das blaue T-Schirt angezogen. Danach habe ich die Faeden des elektrischen Betriebknopfes voneinander entfernt und einen nach dem anderen gerissen, damit kein elektrischer Kontakt entsteht, der den S.S.Guertel aosloesen kann. Nach der Entfernung des Betriebknopfes habe ich ihn in meine Hosentasche gesteckt. Die beiden anderen T-Schirts und den S.S.Guertel habe ich im ersten Stock des verlassenen Hauses zusammen gelassen. Ich habe das Haus verlassen und ich bin Richtung der Taxi-Station von Osoffia durch die Treppen runtergelaufen. Auf dem Weg herunter habe ich den Betriebknopf in einen Muelleimer geworfen.

Ich bin zum Platz in der Unterstadt von Haifa angekommen, in dem sich regelmaessig Arbeiter aus der Westbank sammeln. Von dort aus wollte ich nach Osoffia fahren, um meinen Freund, Tarek Kayoof, besuchen kann. Ich habe bei seinem Vater, Abu Alameer, zwei Monate vor der heutigen Intifada als Helfer fuer Fliesenleger gearbeitet. Die Arbeit haben wir in dem Haus seiner Tochter gemacht. Da die Telefonnummer von Tarek in meinem Handy, dessen Nummer (057-984929), gespeichert ist, habe ich einen Telefonapparat gesucht, um meinen Bruder Mahmoud anzurufen. Mein Handy habe ich bei meinem Bruder Mahmoud gelassen, bevor ich zum S.M.Anschlag ausgegangen bin. Und deswegen bin ich in das Restaurant von Um Schaker in dem Arbeiterpaltz gegangen, um eine Telefonkarte zu kaufen. Aber ich habe dort nicht gefunden. Ich bin zu einem anderen Restaurant in der Naehe gegangen, und hier habe ich eine T.Karte fuer 18 Schekel und eine Dose CocaCola gekauft.

Ich habe meinen Bruder Mahmoud auf sein Handy, dessen Nummer (052-496661) ist, angerufen, aber sein Handy war aus. Ich habe auch auf mein Handy, das ich bei Mahmoud gelassen habe, angerufen, und es war auch aus. Ich versuchte nochmal vom selben Telefonapparat meinen Bruder Mahmoud auf andere Nummer, 059-701008, zu erreichen, aber ohne Erfolg, da ich von hier aus die Nummer der

palaestinensischen Firma „Jawwal“ nicht waehlen kann. Deswegen habe ich zum vierten Mal, und diesmal meinen Freund, Thaaer Abu Alkamel, dessen Nummer (052-533340), angerufen. Ich bat ihn, meinem Bruder Mahmoud mitzuteilen, dass ich aus Haifa anrufe und er soll sein Handy oeffnen, da ich ihn dringend braeuchte.

Thaaer Abu Alkamel fragte mich, was ich in Haifa mache, und ich versicherte ihm, in der ersten Gelegenheit, dass wir uns treffen, zu erzaehlen. Nach diesem Gespraech habe ich meinen Bruder Mahmoud wieder angerufen, aber sein Handy war noch aus. Deswegen bin ich Richtung der Taxistation gegangen, um zu meinem Freund Tarek zu fahren. Ich habe aber entschieden, zur Telefonzelle zurueckzukehren, um meinen Bruder Mahmoud anzurufen. Und diesmal auch ohne Erfolg. Ich habe wieder T. Abu Alkamel angerufen, und ihn gebeten, mich mit meinem Bruder Mahmoud in Verbindung zu setzen. Ich habe meinen Bruder Mahmoud auf sein Handy, Nr. (052- 496661) angerufen, und diesmal antwortete er. Ich fragte ihn nach der Handynummer von Tarek Kayoof, und er hat mir Handynummer gegeben, aber die Nummer war nicht fuer Tarek. Ich bat ihn, weiter zu suchen. Zwischendurch habe ich einen Stift aus dem nahliegenden Restaurant geholt. Mein Bruder hat mir die Telefonnummer von Tarek's Haus gegeben und ich habe sie auf meine Hand geschrieben. Als ich in Haifa festgenommen wurde, wurde diese Nummer registriert.

Frage: hat sich dein Bruder nicht ueberrascht, dass du den Anschlag nicht gemacht hast, als du ihn angerufen hast?

Antwort: ja, er hat sich ueberrascht, als ich mit ihm gesprochen habe. Er fragte mich danach, und ich lachte ihn aus, dass dies kapput ist, und was ihr mir gegben habt, keinen Strom liefert. Mein Bruder Mahmoud verlangte von mir, nach Jenin zurueckzukehren. Ich sagte ihm, dass ich die Hosen, d.h. den S.S.Guertel, weggeforfen habe und ich moechte meinen Freund Tarek in Osoffia besuchen gehen. Und danach werde ich nach Jenin zurueckkehren. Ich habe Tarek angerufen, aber das Telefon zuhause war abgetrennt. Ich entschied mich nach Osoffia zu fahren, ohne vorher anzurufen. Ich wandte mich zur Taxistation von Ossofia. Aber ein paar Meter entfernt, haben mich Polizisten in Uniform ueberrascht, mich festgenommen, und mich zur Polizeistation gebracht.

In der Vernehmung habe ich ein Gestaendnis eingelegt und sie ueber den S.S.Guertel informiert, den ich im verlassenen Haus hinterlassen habe. Ich bin mit den Polizisten zu dem verlassenen Haus gegangen und habe dort auf den S.S.Guertel hingewiesen. Danach haben mich die Polizisten zur Polizeistation in Haifa zurueckgebracht und von dort hierher. Ich habe ein Gestaendnis in der Vernehmung eingelegt in dem, was ich vor dir geschrieben habe.

- Frage: du hast vorher gesagt, dass Thabet Merdawe Aktivist des Jihad Islame in Jenin ist. Weisst du, seit wann er Mitglied in Jihad Islame ist, und warum er gesucht wird ?
- Antwort: mir ist bekannt, dass der o.g. Thabet Merdawe seit fuenf Monaten Mitglied des Jihad Islame in Jenin ist. Und er fuehrt das Jihad Islame in Jenin nach der Liquidierung von lyad Herdawe durch die Israelis, wie wir in den Nachrichten gehoert haben. Aber ich habe keine Ahnung, warum er von den Israelis gesucht ist, und welche Aktionen er ausfuehrte.
- Frage: wann hast du zum Erstmal Thabet Merdawe kennengelernt.
- Antwort: zum Erstmal habe ich ihn vor drei Monaten im Haus meines Bruders Mahmoud in Jenin's Fluechtlingslager kennengelernt. Mein Bruder Mahmoud gehoert auch dem militaerischen Fluegel des Jihad Islame und er ist auch gesucht seit ca. drei Monaten von den Israelis.
- Frage: verfuegst du ueber Waffen ? Hast du schonmal geschossen ?
- Antwort: ich habe keine Waffen. Aber mein Bruder Mahmoud hat ein Gewehr, Typ M -16, den er vom o.g. Thabet Merdawe bekommen hat. Ich denke, dass dieses Gewehr dem Jihad Islame gehoert. Vor einem Monat und vor zwei Wochen vor meiner Festnahme habe ich dieses Gewehr in die Hand genommen. Mit meinem Freund, Thaeer Abu Alkamel, sind wir auf den Berg in der Naehe des F.Lagers gegangen und dort auf Zielflaschen geschossen. Im ersten Mal habe ich drei Kugeln und Thaeer hat vier Kugeln geschossen. Im zweiten Mal hat jeder von uns fuenf Kugeln geschossen. Das Gewehr haben wir jedes Mal meinem Bruder Mahmoud am selben Tag zurueckgegeben. Ich moechte hinzufuegen, dass ich waehrend der israel. Bombadierung, deren Gruende mir nicht bekannt sind, auf die Stadt Jenin vor anderthalb Monaten, drei- mal zum Schutz meines von den Israelis gesuchten Bruders Mahmoud mit ihm im F.Lager bewaffnet ausgegangen bin. Er hat mir zu seinem Schutz das o.g. Gewehr M-16 gegeben.
- Frage: hast du dich an Kundgebungen gegen die oeffentl. Ordnung waehrend der jetzigen Intifada beteiligt ?
- Antwort: ja, am Anfang der Intifada. Und in den Monaten Okt. + Nov. 2000 habe ich fuenf Mal an Auseinandersetzungen mit israel. Soldaten am Checkpoint Aljalameh teilgenommen. Waehren dieser Auseinandersetzungen habe ich Steine auf israel. Soldaten geworfen. In einer dieser Auseinandersetzungen hat mit mir mein Freund Amjad Azmi Hosnija teilgenommen und er ist erschossen. Nach seinem Tod habe ich entschieden, einen S.M.Anschlag zu machen, wie ich am Anfang dieser Aussage geschildert habe.

Frage: habt ihr an diesen o.g. Auseinandersetzungen am Checkpoint Jalameh nur Steine oder verschiedene Sachen auf die Soldaten geworfen ?

Antwort: wir haben Steine geworfen und einen Schleuder benutzt. Den Schleuder habe ich von meinem o.g. Freund Amjad genommen. Ich moechte hinzufuegen, dass ich wehrend einer dieser Auseinandersetzungen eine Brennoflache neben einer Mauer gefunden habe. Diese Brennoflasche habe ich auf die Soldaten geschleudert, aber sie ist weit von ihnen gefallen.

Frage: kennst du die Teilnehmer an diesen Auseinandersetzungen am Checkpoint Aljalameh ? kannst du dich an sie erinnern ?

Antwort: Zikleute haben daran teilgenommen. Von ihnen kenne : (1) den o.g. Amjad, (2) Usamah Eed Na'naa'h Turkaman und er ist waehrend Wechselschuesse mit israel. Soldaten am Checkpoint Aljalameh erschossen, (3) Muneer Ersaan, 17 Jahre alt, vom Jenin's F.Lager, hat mit mir an fast allen Auseinandersetzungen am Checkpoint Aljalameh teilgenommen, und er hat auch Steine auf die Soldaten geworfen, (4) Amjad Albakh, 20 Jahre alt, vom Jenin's F.Lager und er hat auch an allen Auseinandersetzungen mit mir teilgenommen und Steine auf die Soldaten geworfen. Soweit ich mich erinnere, hat er in vier Auseinandersetzungen fuenf Brennoflaschen auf die Soldaten am Checkpoint Aljalameh geschleudert. Es waren auch Jugendliche aus Jenin, Alyamoon und Burkeen mit uns, aber ich erinnere mich z.Z. nicht an ihren Namen.

Frage: wolltest du den S.M.Anschlag, den du in Haifa machen wolltest, im Namen einer bestimmten Organisation machen ?

Antwort: ja, im Namen des Jihad Islame, dem ich angehoere.

Frage: moechtest du etwas hinzufuegen, zu dem was du oben gesagt hast ?

Antwort: ja, ich moechte hinzufuegen, dass ich meine Tat bereue. Dies ist die Aussage, die ich freiwillig mit meiner Hand geschrieben habe. Ich bestaetige ihrer Richtigkeit und dies ist meiner Unterschrift.

<u>Datum</u>	<u>Uhrzeit</u>	<u>Ort</u>	<u>Vernehmer</u>
25/9/01	15:25	Kischoon	Lutuf Mere'e, Nr.90108-2

Hiermit ist die Uebersetzung der Aussage des o.g. aus dem Arabisch ins Hebraeisch, nachdem er sie vor mir eigenhaendig geschrieben hat : ich habe verstanden, dass du mir ein paar Klaerungs-fragen bzgl. der schon von mir abgegebenen Polizeiaussagen stellen moechtest. Ich habe die gesetzliche Warnung verstanden und ich bin bereit, jede Frage zu beantworten, die du mir stellen wuerdest.(Unterschrift des Verdaechtigen).

- Frage: sind alle von dir bei der Polizei abgegebenen Aussagen richtig?
- Antwort: ja, alle meine bei der Polizei abgegebenen und eigenhaendig geschriebenen Aussagen sind richtig.
- Frage: in deiner Aussage hast du gesagt, dass du den S.M.Anschlag in Haifa mittels eines Messers Juden als Rache fuer den Mord Amjad ermoerden moechtest. Wie hast du dich auf den Anschlag vorbereitet? Wolltest du Menschen erstechen ? Und dann dich selbst toeten? Erklaere mir bitte diesen Punkt.
- Antwort: ich war zuhause im Jenin's F.Lager und habe angefangen an meinen ermoerderten Freund Amjad zu denken. In meinen Kopf ging die Idee, nach Haifa zu fahren und ein Messer an meinen Hueften nicht versteckt zu tragen, damit sie mich sehen. Entweder werden sie mich erschiessen oder mich festnehmen. Ich dachte, die Polizei wird mich moeglicherweise festnehmen. Ich hatte keine Absicht, einen bestimmten Menschen zu erstechen. Aber am Tag der Ermordung von Amjad habe ich entschieden, einen S.M.Anschlag in Haifa zu machen, wie ich in der ersten Aussage erzaehlt habe.
- Frage: in deiner Aussage hast du erzaehlt, dass du an Steinewerfen auf die Armee mit anderen beteiligt war. Erinnerst du dich daran ,wieviel mal du Steine auf die Armee geworfen hast, wieviel Steine jedesmal ?
- Antwort: ja, ich hatte nicht mehr als zehn Mal in zwei Monaten. Und jedes Mal habe ich zw. zehn bis zwanzig Steine geworfen.
- Frage: wann bist du in die palaest. Polizei eingetreten ? Und wo hast du gearbeitet ?
- Antwort: am 1/3/2001 bin ich in die palaest. Polizei angetreten und ich habe bis zum 21/7/2001 als Gefaengniswaerter im Jenin's Zivilgefaengnis gearbeitet.
- Frage: Sameer Tubasse sagte in seiner Aussage, dass ihr geplant habt, deinem Vorschlag nach einen S.M.Anschlag gemeinsam zu machen. Ist das richtig ?
- Antwort: ja ,dies ist richtig. Wir haben geplant nach dem Vorschlag von Sameer, einen S.M.Anschlag gemeinsam zu machen.
- Frage: warum bist aber allein gegangen, um den S.M.Anschlag zu machen, und gegen die Abmachung mit Sameer ?
- Antwort: da ich Angst um Sameer hatte, wenn er einen S.M.Anschlag macht. Ich wollte nicht, dass er stirbt.

- Frage: dein Freund Sameer sagte in seiner Aussage, dass er mit dir an Steinewerfen auf die Armeekraefte teilgenommen hat. Ist das richtig ?
- Antwort: ja, dies ist richtig. Am Beginn der Al-Aqsa Intifada hat mein Freund Sameer mit mir an Steinewerfen auf die Armeekraefte am Aljalameh Checkpoint viermal teilgenommen.
- Frage: warum hast du ueber Sameer Tubasse nicht erzaehlt, obwohl du ueber seinen Plan, einen S.M.Anschlag zu machen, gewusst hast ?
- Antwort: da ich nicht erwartet habe, dass Sameer dies doch machen wuerde, obwohl wir darueber gesprochen haben. Ich habe auch nicht erwartet, dass Sameer ueberhaupt einen S.M.Anschlag machen kann. Und deswegen habe ich ueber ihn in meiner polizeilichen Aussage nicht erzaehlt.
- Frage: kannst du mir ueber die Sache mit den Jungfrauen im Paradies erzaehlen ?
- Antwort: wie ich in der ersten Aussage gesagt habe, mein Bruder Mahmoud und Thabet Merdawe haben mit mir darueber gesprochen. Sie sagten mir, wer einen S.M.Anschlag macht, kommt ins Paradies und dort bekommt fuer sich allein 72 Jungfrauen. Man kann mit denen heiraten und gutes Leben machen. Sicherlich gibt es dort einen Fluss von Getraenken, einen Fluss von Honig, einen Fluss von Joghurt und alles, was du moechtest, gibt es dort.
- Frage: warum hast akzeptiert, einen S.M.Anschlag gegen Juden zu machen? Hast du etwas gegen sie ?
- Antwort: ich habe es als Rache wegen des Mordes meines Freundes Amjad akzeptiert. Und weil mein Bruder Mahmoud und Thabet Merdawe mich ueberzeugt haben. Dies ist der einzige Grund.
- Frage: du hast in deiner Aussage erzaehlt, dass du den S.M.Anschlag, in Majedo- oder Benyamina-Gebiet machen wolltest. Wo wolltest du genau in Majedo machen? Kennst du einen bestimmten Ort ?
- Antwort: ich weiss nicht, wo Majedo liegt. Und ich kenne Benyamina- Gebiet nicht. Aber vor dem Anschlag haben sich: Alhaj Ali, Thabet Merdawe und ein dritter Mann, den ich nicht kenne, getroffen. Sie planten den S.M.Anschlag und schlugen einige Orte, darunter Majedo und Benyamina, vor. Persoenlich kenne ich diese Orte nicht.
- Frage: warum hast du den S.M.Anschlag nicht gemacht ? Hat der in deiner Verfuegung stehende Sprengstoff nicht funktioniert ? Oder waren zu viel Leute, die du dich erbarmst ? Warum hast du an deine Mutter gedacht ?

Antwort: den S.M.Anschlag habe ich nicht gemacht, da das Bild meiner Mutter in meine Gedanken ging. Es waren auch dort kleine Kinder, die ich nicht schlechtes antun moechte. Es waren auch Araber, die ich nicht toeten moechte. Ich habe auch eine Thailaenderin gesehen, die ein Kind traegt und dann habe ich an meine Mutter gedacht. Und deswegen habe ich den Anschlag nicht gemacht.

Frage: du hast in deiner Aussage gesagt, dass du Haifa als Anschlagsort ausgewaehlt hast, da du dich in Haifa leicht verstecken kannst. Warum wolltest du dich verstecken, wenn du aber durch S.M.Anschlag doch getoetet wirst ?

Antwort: ich bin mit dem Gefuehl hingegangen, dass ich dies verfehle. Und mit dem Gefuehl, dass ich den S.M.Anschlag stornieren werde. Ich habe zwischen Haifa und Affulah ausgewaehlt, da ich den Ort besser kenne. Und ich kenne auch dort einige Versteckorte. Ich habe auch damit gerechnet, den S.M.Anschlag zu stornieren. Und deswegen habe ich Haifa ausgewaehlt.

Frage: moechtest du etwas hinzufuegen?

Antwort: nein, ich habe nichts.

-Unterschrift-

**Testimonial of Areen Awa'd Hussein Ahmad
(translated from Arabic into Hebrew into German)**

**Aussage von Areen Awa'd Hussein Ahmad
(übersetzt aus dem Arabisch ins Hebraisch ins Deutsch)**

Im Namen des Erbarmigen und des Barmherzigen

Ich, die unten unterschreibende Areen Awa'd Hussein Ahmad, erkläre aus meinem freiwilligen Willen hiermit:

Ruecktritt von Aufopferungsanschlag in Reschon Lezion (Israel. Stadt – E.Sabbgh)

Ich hatte einen Kontakt mit Jadallah Mahmoud Atallah Salem vom Fluechtlingslager Dheischeh, 26 Jahre alt, und er ist als Maertyrer am 8.3.2002 gefallen. Und dies hat mich veranlasst, zu denken, diese Aktion zu machen. Nach einiger Zeit und wegen der Invasion der israel. Streitkraefte in Betlehem und was sie dort von Brutalitaet und Mord machten, hat dies meine Beharrlichkeit bekræftigt, diese Aktion doch durchzufuehren. Nachdem die palaestinensischen Aktivisten die Grabeskirche in Betlehem verlassen haben, habe ich das Thema dem Ali Yousef Almughrabe, 16 Jahre alt, vom Fluechtlingslager Dheischeh, vorgelegt. Er verlangte Zeit, daran zu denken und er soll die Meinung seines Brueders, Ahmad Almughrabe, vom Fluechtlingslager Dheischeh, hoeren. Danach hat er (Ali) mir Bescheid gegeben, dass ich jederzeit bereit sein soll. In der Tat hatten wir uns in der Uni getroffen, so dass ich das Testament am Mittwoch, den 22.5.02, um 11 Uhr vorlesen soll. Aber zu meiner Ueberraschung sagte mir Ali an dem verabredeten Mittwoch, dass die Aktion (Anschlag) heute sein wird, wenn es Gott will. Und Alles hat sich geaendert. Ich fuhr mit ihm und Mahmoud Salem, vom Fluechtlingslager Dheischeh, mit dem Wagen zum Haus von Darin Almughrabe, 20 Jahre alt, aus Betlehem, und dort machte ich die erforderlichen Gebote. Mahmoud Salem erklarte mir und dem jungen Mann, der mit mir den Anschlag gemeinsam ausfuehren wollte, den Plan. Der junge mann heisst Issa Bder. Ich traf ihn nur dort, er ist 16 und halb Jahre alt, vom Al- Duhah (Stadtteil von Betlehem, E.S).

Wir, drei, wiederholten den Plan, fuhren wir zu Beit Sahour, lernten wir Ibrahim Alsajde, kennen, der uns auch den Plan weitererklaerte. Issa und ich blieben in dem Wagen, Ibrahim und seine Frau fuhren vor uns bis wir zu dem Ort ankamen. Ibrahim schrieb uns die beiden Anschlagsorte vor und ging. Nach zehn Minuten rief ich ihn an und sagte ich ihm etnschieden, dass ich zurueckkehren moechte, aber er wollte mir nicht zu hoeren und versuchte mehr als eine Stunde zu entweichen. Nachdem er aufgab, entschieden wir, Issa und ich, nichts zu machen. Aber im letzten Augenblick entschied sich Issa, zu bleiben. Ich entschied mich, zurueckzukeheren, auch wenn dies nach Tagen wird, weil ich diese Sache nicht machen will.

Ich kehrte mit Ibrahim und siener Frau zurueck, die mich verspottete, da ich dies nicht machte. Ibrahim sagte mir, ich werde sehr bereuen, und fing er an, ueber das Paradies und die damit zusammenhaengenden Sachen zu erzaehlen, bis wir in Bet Jalah ankamen. Dort nahm ich ein Taxi zu Ali Mughrabe und Mahmoud Salem, beide vom Fluechtlingslager Dheischeh, und dann kehrten wir zum Haus von Darin Almughrabe in Betlehem, 20 Jahre alt, zurueck. Ich habe mich umgezogen, und sie brachten mich nach Hause zurueck.....

Areen Awad' Hussein Ahmad 29.5.2002

Mitteilung der:israel. PolizeiAusweis Nr.
908331416Vorname
AreenFamilienname
AhmadFamilienstand
LedigGeschlecht
weiblichReligion
MosleminGeburtsdatum
1982Geburtsort
JordanienAdresse
Bet- SahourArbeitsplatz
SchuelerinFamilienname des Vaters
Awad'/ HusseinDatum
29.5.02Uhrzeit
17:25Ort
Russischer PlatzVernehmer
Zion Sasson, Nr.456566

Ich sah die o.g. und erkaerte ihr, dass ich ein Polizist bin, Nr.456566. Mein Name ist Zion Sasson und dass sie verdaechtigt, einen Selbstmordanschlag mit anderen zu planen, Mitgliedschaft in einer feindlichen Organisation. Ich warne dich, du musst meine Fragen nicht beantworten, aber jedes Etwas, was du sagst, wird zu deinem Lasten im Gericht verwendet.
Zion Sasson – Unterschrift

Ich verstand den Inhalt der Warnung und aus meinem freiwilligen und guten Willen erzaehle ich dir, was mit mir geschehen ist. Vor einem Jahr lernte ich an der Uni von Betlehem einen jungen Mann kennen, der Jadallah Mahmoud Atallah Salem heisst. Er ist vom Fluechtlingslager Dheischeh in Betlehem, 26 Jahre alt. Zu der Uni kam er oft mit anderen jungen Maennern. Jadallah und ich gingen sieben Monate zusammen. Dann veinbarten wir zu heiraten. Ich habe den Termin der Hochzeit bis zim Studiumabschluss vergeschoben, und er soll ein Haus bauen. Am 8/3/2002 toetete die israel. Armee Jadallah. Jadallah war Aktivist in dem Tand'im, der Fateh- Organisation. Am 2/4/2002 dringte die israel. Armee in Betlehem ein. Ein Teil der Tand'im- Aktivisten fluechteten in die Grabeskirche u.a. Ali Mughrabe, den ich kannte, als ich mit Jadallah war. Nach zehn Tagen ging Ali aus der Grabeskirche. Am 16/5/2002 rief ich ihn an, und sagte ihm, dass ich mit ihm reden will. Wir trafen uns eines Nachmittags neben der Grabeskirche und sagte ich ihm, dass ich einen Anschlag durchfuehren moechte. Er antwortete, dass er seinen Bruder, Ahmad, fragen soll und dann wird er mir eine Antwort geben.

Danach ging jeder von uns in seine Richtung.

Ali fragte mich, ob ich ernstlich bin. Ich antwortete, ja. Er sagte, alles in Ordnung, bereite dich vor. Wir vereinbarten einen neuen Termin, den letzten Dienstag, den 21/5/02 an der Uni, und ich erinnere mich nicht an die Uhrzeit. Wie vereinbart kam Ali zum Treffpunkt an der Uni und sagte, ich muss in den naechsten zwei Tagen bereit sein, da der Selbstmordanschlag am Donnerstag, den 23/5/02 oder am Freitag

durchgefuehrt wird. (In dieser Zeit der Vernehmung bat die Verdaechtigte um Kopfschmerztabletten und ein Glas Wasser. Nach einigen Minuten bekam sie dies). Den Selbstmordanschlag entschied ich mich zu machen, ohne einen rechtfertigenden oder respektvollen Grund zu haben. Ali sagte mir, ich soll am Mittwoch zum Haus seiner Schwester kommen, um das Testament zu machen. Das heisst, mich durch Video zu fotografieren.

Am Mittwoch, um 8:00 Uhr traf ich mich mit Ali an der Uni und ich war doch ueberrascht, als ich einen anderen jungen Mann mit Ali sah, der Mahmoud Salem heisst. M. Salem ist vom Fluechtlingslager Dheischeh und er war in dem Tand'im aktiv. Ich suchte eine Ecke an der Uni, damit keiner uns sehen kann. Ali sagte mir, ich soll an Gott glauben und heute wird der Anschlag sein. Ich war ueberrascht und sagte zu Ali, ich dachte nicht, dass dies so schnell werden soll. Ich moechte hinzufuegen, dass ich waehrend meines Treffens mit Ali vor zwei Tagen ihn fragte, warum sein Bruder, Ahmad, mich ausgewaehlt hat, obwohl andere Kandidaten fuer Selbstmordanschlag zur Verfuegung standen. Ali antwortete, dass ich ins Paradies gehen soll und ich werde Jadallah treffen. Ich lachte und sagte ihm, ich bin kein Maedchen, so dass du mir auslachen und solches Quatsch erzaehlen kannst.

Ali, Salem und ich fuhren mit dem Wagen und Ali stellte mir Mahmoud Salem vor. In dem Wagen machte ich dem Ali eine Handbewegung, die bedeutete, warum Mahmoud ihn begleite. Er zuckte mit den Schultern und sagte, er wird mir spaeter erzaehlen. Ich traue dem M. Salem nicht, und Jadallah traute ihm auch nicht. Wir kamen zum Haus von Ali's Schwester, Darin. Dort traf ich einen jungen Mann, der Issa Bder heisst. M. Salem holte eine Skizze aus der Tasche, die wie ein Plan aussieht. M. Salem und I. Bder gingen raus, damit Issa eine Fahruebung machen kann. Darin und ich blieben zuhause und ich schrieb ein Testament fuer meine Eltern. Ich schrieb ihnen, dass ich diesen Weg suchte. Danach fotografierte mich Ali mit dem Video. Nach einiger Zeit kehrten M. Salem und Issa zu Darin's Haus zurueck.. Ali zeigte mir den Sprengstoff und zeigte Issa einen anderen S.stoff. Da ich keine Hosen hatte, ging ich mit M. Salem zum Markt und kaufte mir Hosen. Danach kehrten wir zu Darin's Haus zurueck. Dort habe ich mich umgezogen. M. Salem zeigte uns den Plan anhand der Skizze wieder. Mein Plan sah so aus, dass ich den S. Stoff am Ruecken trage verbunden mit einem Betriebknopf zwischen den Busen. Anhand einer Stromschnuer sollte ich den Betriebknopf aufheben, und dies soll den Sprengstoff ausloesen.

Ich moechte zeichnen, dass ich mich vor dem Fotografieren gereinigt habe und habe gebeten. Danach gab mir Darin eine kurzere Bluse, damit ich in Isarel nicht verdaechtigt aussehe und dass ich genau wie eine Israelin aussehe. Nachdem Issa und ich das Funkionieren des Sprenstoffes lernten und uns fotgrafieren liessen, verliessen wir das Haus gegen 12:30 Uhr. Dann fuhren wir, Issa, Mahmoud und ich mit Mitsubishe – Wagen, weisser Farbe zur Tankstelle in Bet Sahour. Als ich im Darin's Haus waren, fragte ich Ali ob ich seinen Bruder Ahmad Mughrabe treffen kann. Ali verneinte, da sein Bruder von den israel. Sicherheitskraeften gesucht wird. An der Tankstelle trafen wir uns mit Ibrahim Sarahne. Sarahne war mit einer russischen Frau und einem einjaehrigen Maedchen. Die Frau hat blondes Haar. Mahmoud Salem hat uns den Ibrahim vorgestellt und sagte, dass die Frau Ibrahim's Frau ist. Ibrahim zeigte uns in dem Wagen eine Skizze, die auf den Anschlagort hinweist und die dem uns vorher von M. Salem gezeigten Plan aehnlich aussieht. M. Salem gab mir ein Funkgeraet und erkaerte mir seine Bedienung. M. Salem sagte, dieses Geraet soll der Verbindung zw. den beiden Wagen dienen. Ibrahim sagte uns, er wird uns mitteilen, ob es Checkpoints auf dem Weg geben wuerde. M.Salem

fragte Ibrahim, ob die gebrochene Lampe des Wagens uns keine Probleme machen koennte. Ibrahim verneinte dies. Issa und ich blieben in dem Mitsubishe. Ibrahim und seine Frau fuhren vor uns, damit sie uns den Weg zeigt. Auf dem Weg sagte mir Issa, dass die Frau nicht Ibrahim's Frau ist, sondern seine Frau sieht anders aus. Auf dem ganzen Weg fuhr Ibrahim vor uns vor und weiste uns durch das Funkgeraet hin, ob wir rechts oder links fahren sollen. Alles haben wir durch das Funkgeraet bekommen. Waehrend der Fahrt fragte ich Ibrahim, wann werden wir ankommen und wo soll der Anschlagort sein. Ibrahim antwortete, wir drei wissen das. Bis heute weiss ich nicht, was er gemeint hat. Issa fuhr die ganze Zeit schlecht, da er nicht gut fahren kann. Zusaetzlich waren keine guten Bremsen im Wagen. Auf dem Weg lies ich die Fahrschilder. Auf dem einen stand Ihud (israel. Kleinstadt- E.S.) Von dort fuhren wir nach Reschon Lezion. Bevor wir den Wagen anhalteten, sagte mir Ibrahim durch das F.geraet, schau mal rechts, und hier wird der Anschlag sein. Und er sagte Issa, schau mal links, und hier wird der Anschlag sein. Issa haltete den Wagen an, stiegen wir aus jeder mit dem geladenem Gepaeck und bereit fuer die Aktivierung. Ich ging zu meinem Ort und Issa ging zu dem fuer den Anschlag vorgesehenen Ort. Auf dem Plan erschien nur ein Fuessgaengeruebergang, aber dort waren doch zwei. Ich stand allein neben einer Mauer und nachdachte, warum soll ich einen Selbstmordanschlag machen und das ist ein Selbstmord. Das Selbstmord ist verboten im Koran. Ich sah Menschen wie ich, und sie machten mir nicht schlechtes. Warum soll ich einen Selbstmordanschlag machen.

Nachdem Ibrahim den Ort verlassen hat, sprach ich mit ihm mit dem Funkgeraet und sagte ihm, dass ich bereue und ich meochte nichts machen. Ibrahim antwortete, dies ist nicht moeglich, du kannst nicht zuruecktreten und die Sache ist nicht in meinen Haenden. Ich fing an, ihn zu bitten, mich abzuholen, aber er lehnte es ab. Nachdem er aufgab, sagte er mir, er wird versuchen, mich mit Mahmoud Salem in Verbindung ze setzen. Nach fuef Minuten sprach ich mit Mahmoud Salem und sagte ihm, dass ich zurueckkehren moechte. Er versuchte mich, zu ueberzeugen, dass nicht jeder zu diesem Stand (Posten) kommt. Er sagte, ich soll an Gott glauben. Ich sagte, lass Gott beiseits und liess mich gehen. Alles geschah neben dem Wagen, mit dem wir kamen. Issa kam zu mir und sagte, er will nach Betlehem zurueck und nicht den Anschlag machen. Ich sagte ihm , dass ich auch nicht ueberzeugt bin, den Anschlag zu machen. Mahmoud und Ibrahim versuchten mir zu ertweichen und nicht mehr mit mir, sondern mit Issa zu sprechen. Ich sprach trotzdem mit Mahmoud, dass Ibrahim uns abholen oder uns Fahrgeld geben soll. Issa und ich liessen die Sprengstoffladung herunter und stiegen in den Wagen ein. Wir forderten Ibrahim auf, zu kommen oder uns Geld zu geben. Nachdem Ibrahim feststellte, dass wir entschlossen sind, sprach mit uns Mahmoud, dass Ibrahim uns Fahrgeld geben wird. Issa und ich stiegen aus dem Wagen und fangen an, zu Fuss zu gehen und liessen wir die Sprengstoffladungen in dem Wagen. Gegen 16:30 Uhr kam Ibrahim zurueck und gab uns 500 Schekel. Ibrahim's Frau sollte uns ein Taxi bestellen. Ibrahim und seine Frau sprachen auf Hebraeisch und sie machte mir Platz und ich stieg in den Wagen ein. Issa sagte, ich bleibe hier, um den Anschlag zu machen. Ibrahim gab Issa 200 Schekel, damit er Zigaretten und Essen vor dem Anschlag kauft. Ibrahim, seine Frau und ich fuhren fort, und Issa blieb dort. Auf dem Rueckweg, sagte mir Ibrahim, guck mal, da sind hier viele Menschen, und du wirst sicherlich bereuen, dass du den Anschlag nicht gemacht hast. Du wirst keine andere Chance haben, sagte er mir. Seine Faru sagte mir, du bist feige und du denkst nur an Ehemann und Familie. Ibrahim sagte, wir benoetigten zwei Wochen, den Anschlagort zu suchen. Seine Frau sagte, du siehst hier doch viele Juden und du

magst sie nicht und du weisst auch nicht, was der Koran ueber das Paradies sagt. Sie sagte weiter auf Englisch, du bist feige. Im Gegesatz zu seiner Frau redete Ibrahim mit mir herzlich, aber ich brachte ihn zum Verstummen. Ibrahim liess mich dann zwischen Bet Jalah und Alkhader gegen 18:00 Uhr abends aussteigen. Ibrahim gab mir das Handy und bat mich, mit Mahmoud zu sprechen und ihm mitzuteilen, dass Alhaj' ihm 5000 Schekel ueberweisen soll. Ich kenne den Alhaj' nicht, aber ich denke, er ist Ahmad Almughrabe. Ali und Mahmoud bestellten fuer mich ein Taxi. Der Treffpunkt mit dem Taxi war neben dem Friedhof von Alkhader. Von dort aus fuhren wir, Ali, Mahmoud und ich, zum Haus von Darin. Dort habe ich mich umgezogen. Ali und Mahmoud brachten mich nach Hause zurueck. Donnerstags abend schickte ich Ali eine Nachricht mit dem Handy, dass ich ihn im Darin's Haus sehen moechte, damit ich ihm erkläre, warum ich den Anschlag nicht ausfuehrte. Ich moechte zeichnen, dass ich am Tag des Anschlages in den Nachrichten ueber den Anschlag gehoert habe. Bezueglich Jadallah moechte ich klarmachen, dass ich doch wusste, dass er in dem Tand'im aktiv ist und seine Freunde in dem Tand'im Ahmad Mughrabe, Ali Mughrabe, Mahmoud Salem und Mahmoud Mughrabe waren.

Dies ist alles, was ich zu sagen habe.

Ich las ihr den Inhalt ihrer Aussage, sie bestaetigte sie und unterschrieb sie eigenhaendig.

Zion Sasson 456566.

Ich zeige dir hier zwei weisse Papiere geschrieben auf Arabisch. Kannst du sie erkennen.

- Unterschrift -

Ja, sie sind meine, mit meiner Handschrift.

Ich zeichnete die beiden Papiere mit den ersten Buchstaben meines Namen Z. S. und Datum 29.5.2002.

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Abstract

Title: Explaining Palestinian Suicide Bombings from an Organizational Perspective: The (In)Effectiveness of Suicide Bombings as Organizational Strategy in the Palestinian Struggle with Israel from 1993 to 2008.

Submitted by: Lydia Wazir-Staubmann, Dr.Phil, 2009

Directed by: Dr. John Bunzl, Department of Political Science, University of Vienna

Using human life as a weapon is often presented as a manifestation of Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism. In fact, however, studies by various scholars such as Ariel Merari, Robert Pape and Nasra Hassan as well as recent surveys have shown that the suicide attacks in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are linked more to politics than to religion. What motivated the various Palestinian organizations to use suicide attacks? Although religion does not play as large a role as it is normally accorded, it was used effectively by the Palestinian Islamic groups Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad to recruit suicide attackers and to raise operational funds. But the leadership of these organizations had a secular goal: to force the Israeli government to change its policies and to withdraw from the Palestinian territories. Contrary to belief that the suicide attackers are irrational or fanatical, in fact they are not: the suicide attacks followed a strategic logic designed to coerce the Israeli government into making political and territorial concessions and to assert their power within the Palestinian political arena.

To understand why suicide attacks are used, the focus should be on situational and political factors. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these include the Palestinian's collective sense of historical injustice, political subservience

and a pervasive sense of social humiliations vis-a-vis the Israeli occupational power. The valid logic behind the use of suicide attacks is that they are an effective weapon for an inferior force fighting a greater or great power. Groups using such attacks are playing for strategic stakes and for victory, not mere destruction. The purpose of this research paper is to examine how effective the Palestinian groups were in achieving their goals by using the method of suicide bombings. What caused the suicide bombings to increase in number? What caused them to subside altogether?

Zusammenfassung

Titel: Zur Erklärung Palästinensischer Selbstmordattentate aus Sicht der sie ausführenden Organisationen: Die (In-)Effizienz von Selbstmordattentaten als Strategie von Organisationen im palästinensischen Kampf mit Israel von 1993 bis 2008.

Eingereicht von: Lydia Wazir-Staubmann, Dr.Phil, 2009

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Der Einsatz von Menschen als Waffen wird oft als Ausdruck von islamischem Fundamentalismus oder Fanatismus angesehen. Entgegen dieser Annahme belegen diverse wissenschaftliche Studien von Ariel Merari, Robert Pape und Nasra Hassan, sowie aktuelle Untersuchungen, dass Selbstmordattentate im Konflikt zwischen Israel und Palästina eher auf politische Hintergründe verweisen, als auf religiöse. Was waren die Motive verschiedener palästinensischer Organisationen, Selbstmordattentate auszuführen? Obwohl Religion keine so große Rolle spielt, wie bisher angenommen, wurde sie erfolgreich von den palästinensischen Gruppen „ Hamas“ und „Palästinensischer Islamischer Jihad“ verwendet, um künftige Selbstmordattentäter zu werben und Mittel zu akquirieren. Aber die Führungsverantwortlichen dieser Organisationen verfolgen säkulare Ziele: Israel zu zwingen, seine Politik zu ändern und sich aus den palästinensischen Gebieten zurück zu ziehen sowie sich innerhalb der Palästinensischen politischen Arena zu behaupten. Entgegen der Vermutung, Selbstmordattentäter wären irrational oder fanatisch, sind sie das keineswegs: die Selbstmordanschläge verfolgen die Strategie, Israel zu politischen und territorialen Zugeständnissen zu veranlassen.

Um zu verstehen, warum gerade Selbstmordattentate dafür eingesetzt werden, sollte der Blick auf die situationsbezogenen und politischen Faktoren gelenkt werden. Im Falle des israelisch-palästinensischen Konflikts bedeutet dies das kollektive Empfinden historischer Ungerechtigkeit auf Seiten der Palästinenser, politische Instrumentalisierung und eine tiefe Empfindung der Demütigung durch die israelischen Besatzer. Die Logik hinter dem Einsatz von Selbstmordattentaten besteht darin, dass diese eine effiziente Waffe einer unterlegenen Macht im Kampf gegen einen stärkeren Gegner sind. Gruppierungen, die solche Attacken verwenden, verfolgen ein strategisches Ziel und sind an einem Sieg interessiert, nicht an purer Zerstörung. Ziel dieser Doktorarbeit ist es zu überprüfen, wie erfolgreich palästinensische Gruppen beim Erreichen ihrer Ziele mittels Selbstmordanschlägen sind. Warum ist die Zahl dieser Attentate angestiegen? Was veranlasste ihren Rückgang?

Curriculum Vitae

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